FAMILY PORTRAITS.
THE AUTHOR OF "GETTING INTO SOCIETY," "MRS. MURDEN'S TWO-DOLLAR SILK," "MUSTARD TO MIX,
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BY THE AUTHOR OF "GETTING INTO SOCIETY," "MRS. MURDEN'S TWO-DOLLAR SILK," "MUSTARD TO MIX," ETC. ETC.

"WHAT could have possessed Seth Grovner to marry?" everybody said, when they received his wedding-cards. "And what in the world would his sisters do, poor girls! after having devoted themselves to him all their lives, to have a sister-in-law put over them now, and their nice carpets and furniture spoiled by a family of young children?"

It was a serious affliction, certainly, and felt so by the Misses Grovner themselves, before their friends came on visits of congratulation to the happy pair, tempered by asides of meek condolence to themselves.

The bride, the last person in the world they should have expected Seth Grovner to marry, could not help seeing that she was held in the light of a social calamity by the highly respectable circle into which she suddenly found herself introduced. It required all her amiability to give up the slippered ease and dressing-gown comfort of her own room, twice or thrice every morning, for the first six weeks of her married life, in answer to a summons from the parlor: "Mrs. Jones, an old and highly esteemed friend of the family, having called on her;" or to be introduced to "Miss Paul, sister Sarah's particular pattern of propriety." Then there was Mrs. Peter, who had confidently intended that, if ever Mr. Grovner did marry, it should be her oldest daughter, Mary Jane, and the young lady herself now turned of thirty, and wearing high colors and a great many flounces. Mrs. Alibone, the most fashionable woman on the list, "had been a Proudfit," said Miss Sarah, in enumerating the fine people who visited her; —probably "her mother was a Powler"—only, as "Hard Times" was not then written, that fact had not been ascertained.

The circle in which the Misses Grovner visited, and which forthwith commenced making preparations for a round of solemn entertainments to the bride, was composed of highly respectable families, though respectability is never an antidote against dulness; unfortunately, in this case, as in many others, it was rather a promoter of it.

Mrs. Seth Grovner wearied of sedate morning calls, in which she sat on precisely the same corner of the sofa, and answered to the same catechism as to whether she had "ever been in Philadelphia before, or was this her first visit?" and "How did she like Fairmount?" "Had she seen Laurel Hill yet?" and "Didn't she *admire* Girard College?" when Kitty, the waiter, after the lapse of just so many minutes, made her appearance, and, at a sign from Miss Grovner, presented the silver cake-basket, on the largest silver tray, to the guest, to Mrs. Seth, and then to the sisters-in-law, successively, who made a feint of nibbling at the bride-cake as long as the visitor did, and must have eaten citron and plums enough to make them sick for the rest of the winter, in the course of the allotted six weeks. Then Kitty, replacing the cake-basket on the round-table in the back parlor, presented the cordial and wine-glasses, which Miss Sarah arose to fill, and Mrs. Seth's good health was solemnly proposed and "sipped," at the risk of best silk dresses and new gloves; while the bride herself invariably declined both cake and cordial, with a lack of knowledge or defiance of etiquette, which sincerely distressed her new relatives, and gave the visitor something to talk about for a month to come.

If Mrs. Seth wearied of such trifling civilities as these, and the restraint of evenings passed in the back parlor with her two sisters, when her husband read the newspapers, or played chess with Miss Sarah, and Miss Grovner looked over the board suggestively, holding her worsted-work in her hand; while *she*, poor girl! who did not play chess, and detested fancy work, was not expected to read, and felt herself "checked," whether the players were or not, at any attempt at sprightly conversation, how her spirit rebelled at the entertainments got up at so much expense and trouble for her especial benefit, and which she never was allowed to decline. No matter how much her head ached from the furnace heat, to which she was entirely unaccustomed, or what cold she had taken wearing her bridal-dress four evenings out of six, or how much she wanted to write home, in answer to a most loving letter that day received, and over which her tears had fallen like rain, the ordeal must be gone through with; the grand toilet—for every one made it a point that

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she should "appear in character;" the formal presentation; the stiff conversational circle, for there was little dancing and less music, as may be imagined, in these highly respectable families; the supper-table, with the invariable terrapins and oysters, the ice-cream, the calves-foot jelly and cake; and, worse than all, being expected to enjoy herself in this dreary, monotonous routine, the natural element of her sisters-in-law, to which even her husband had grown accustomed in his long attendance, in a brotherly way, upon them.

If she had been of a weak, timid disposition, she could have suffered herself to be withered into acquiescence, or frozen into the required mould of stiffness and formality; if she had lacked consideration for others as much as she was mentally accused of doing, she would have rebelled at once, and caused open scandal by stirring up her husband to insubordination; but being neither, having a cheerful, light-hearted, and thoroughly independent spirit, tempered by good sense and discretion, Mrs. Seth set herself quietly at work to escape the thraldom that threatened her.

She knew their brother's marriage had been a shock to the Misses Grovner, and especially his choice, a country-girl of three-and-twenty, when he was at least fourteen years older, who could never be trusted, they feared, with the family silver, and who seemed to be entirely ignorant of domestic skill in pickling and preserving, with no idea of the routine and severe *espionage* necessary to keep a household in the exact order to which poor Seth had always been accustomed.

It was always "poor Seth!" now, generally emphasized by a low sigh and little shake of the head. His health would be ruined! for they had discovered Mrs. Grovner encouraged him in going out, when it was fair over head and dry under foot, without his umbrella and overshoes; for the first time in his life, he had declined a course of boneset and chamomile tea for a slight hoarseness; and it was more than suspected that he had "tampered with himself" by taking an infinitesimal dose of sugared pellets, instead, from the heretical black leathern case they had discovered on his wife's dressing-table.

"Poor Seth!" when Mrs. Grovner talked boldly of the opera, and dared to say that *their* piano had not enough octaves by one and a half for some of her favorite arrangements by Herz and Hummel, people they had never heard of; and Miss Sarah's performance of "The Battle of Prague" and "The Spanish Retreat" had been so celebrated in their set on that very instrument. She would be wanting a new one next!

And, above all, "poor, *dear* Seth!" when not only a new piano, but a new house was talked of, and he seemed actually so blinded as to imagine it would be the best thing for all of them that the family circle, so long unbroken, should be divided, and he should set up an establishment of his own, in a modern house, in a new street, with furniture that *could* be moved from one side of the room to the other, if occasion required it, and entirely lacking the hue and the polish of that remote period to which their own claw-footed tables and sideboards belonged.

Nothing less than a complete rupture was expected by all sympathizing friends, who, of course, had "seen how it must all end from the first, and, for their parts, were not in the least surprised;" and nothing but the most delicate tact and kindly consideration on the part of Mrs. Seth could have averted it. She had been as far-seeing as their friends from the first, and though it would have been her part, according to modern theories, to submit meekly to all the losses and crosses of her lot, she did not feel herself called upon to do so, when the income of her husband was sufficient for a separate establishment, and his sisters had been left entirely independent of all masculine aid and succor, which was probably one reason it had never occurred to them to think of matrimony on their own account.

Still, there was a slight coldness between the two contending forces, Miss Sarah loftily declining to offer or give any assistance in the choice of furniture or servants, though, we must say, she punished herself by so doing; and Miss Grovner suspended the copying of the family receipt-book, which she had commenced as a kind of legacy, as soon as she heard Seth was determined to marry, the original going to Sarah, of course. And another thing said Miss Grovner to Miss Paul: "Who in the world would visit them?"

"Seth would be cut off from all congenial society, for it was plain to be seen his wife would never be a favorite in their circle! She had never taken the least pains to conciliate Mrs. Peter, and Mrs. Jones had not been the same friend since the night she wore a dark silk at the little party Mrs. Jones was so good as to give; and then, with her music and riding lessons—it was preposterous for a married woman to take lessons, any way—what time would there be to see after the house, suppose any one should overlook Mrs. Seth's shortcomings,

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and go there? Perhaps it was just as well that mortification should be spared them. But poor Seth!" And Miss Grovner pulled up her black lace mitts, and shook her head towards the portraits of her late lamented parents over the mantel-piece, as much as to say she was glad they had not lived to see the disastrous day. It was enough for her and Sarah to have to bear it.

Respectable as they were, there was one "rancor in the vessel of their peace," before their brother's wife had come to disturb it so greatly. They never had been *fashionable*. Their father had made his money in a business for which they never had had occasion to blush; they had always worn, and eaten, and drank "the best of everything," to use Miss Sarah's favorite expression; yet Mrs. Alibone was the only person with any pretension to fashion who visited them, and, strive as they might, their social position had never varied since they moved into the Twelfth Street house, before their mother's death, and bought the Brussels carpets and blue and fawn curtains that still decorated the parlors. They were secretly shocked at Mrs. Alibone's small bonnets and very free conversation; but she had been a Proudfit, and the L——s, and the C——s, and the D——s, and P——s visited her, so she was petted and courted by the Misses Grovner, who delighted in nothing so much as news of this world from which they were shut out, and caught up every detail eagerly, to be repeated again to Miss Paul and Mrs. Peter, who were *not* visited by Mrs. Alibone.

One of Miss Sarah's most ambitious dreams had been that their brother Seth's marriage, if it ever did take place, might unlock the doors of this palace of enchantment—the fashionable world—to them. She never had agreed with her sister in considering Miss Mary Jane Peter a suitable match for her idolized brother, though not venturing so far as open dissent.

Why should he not marry a fashionable woman? Gentlemanly, well read, and handsome he certainly was, though rather quiet and old-fashioned in his manner. But, after all, he chose to fall in love with and marry, on a two months' notice, a young lady from a country town, who had come to the city for music lessons, with no particular style or connections, or any special attractions so far as they could see!

It was this very absence of pretension that had charmed Mr. Grovner; it was so different from anything he had heretofore met with in ladies' society; and he began to wake up to a new life in her frank, affectionate, buoyant disposition, never fully developed before they were fairly settled in their own home. He was sorry that his sisters allowed themselves to be so blinded to his wife's attractions, and admired the amiability which she displayed in keeping up the established Wednesday visit to Twelfth Street, where she was treated with so much studied reserve, no matter what agreeable invitation or engagement was declined.

"All in good time," said Mrs. Seth, whose kindly nature was grieved at the trouble her sisters-in-law persisted in making for themselves; but she could not in her heart feel sorry when Miss Paul ceased to visit her, and Mrs. Peter declined a sociable tea invitation, which she had felt it incumbent on herself to extend.

And now she speedily found herself in a more congenial element, where she was welcomed for her gayety, and the charm of her one chief accomplishment, a musical talent, remarkable in one who, heretofore, had had such a limited opportunity for its development. Who her visitors were, the Misses Grovner never condescended to inquire, and as their visits were stately, and stated monthly returns of the Wednesday tea-drinkings, they seldom encountered any of them. They mourned over their brother as lost to society; they looked narrowly for symptoms of melancholy or decline, while neither would confess to the other that he grew younger, livelier, and more agreeable every day.

The birth of a nephew was the first shock to the resolute determination of the Misses Grovner not to countenance any of their sister-in-law's proceedings. The first child in the family since the advent of its papa, thirty-six years before, could but make a stir even in the stagnant waters of Twelfth Street.

"For you see Kitty," said Miss Grovner, prying into a long unopened drawer, "it's my brother's child after all, and is to be named David, after my father, which, I suppose, he insisted on; so, it is only fair that he should have *his* father's christening-dress;" and the admiring Kitty held up her hands at the production of a marvellously wrought slip of the finest India muslin; the waist an inch and a half long; the skirt in proportion. But babies were dressed to fit in those days, and the trailing length of modern christening robes was an undreamed of extravagance.

Two leaves of the manuscript receipt-book, relating to possets and panadas, accompanied this invaluable gift; and Mr. and Mrs. Seth looked at each other across the baby, and smiled, when this first olive branch was received, at the decided token of a truce, as well as the quaint cut of the odd little garment, which the most

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lively imagination could not now picture as having enveloped Mr. Seth's well-developed figure.

Miss Sarah suffered from a passing disappointment when her nephew was presented to her. It was the first time in many years that she had beheld such early infancy, and the undecided complexion, unclassical turn of features, and limp expression of figure, were not what she had fondly anticipated. However, David he was called, another trait of his mother's amiability; and Miss Grovner said, "she trusted he would grow more like that best of men—her father—daily." Mrs. Grovner thought of the stiff old gentleman with the white neck-cloth, blue coat, and brass buttons, over the mantle in Twelfth Street, and hoped the kindly wish would never be realized.

The addition of Daisy—that was his mother's name for the juvenile—and his nurse to the family party, made Wednesday quite another thing.

Miss Grovner submitted to any amount of litter in the back parlor, and was always studying out some remarkably nourishing compound from the family receipt-book, which his mother was obliged to avert by every style of stratagem, nursery diet being as different in character as nursery costume in the olden time, wine and spices not being considered by modern schools as suitable as farina or plain sago.

Daisy's mamma could but receive some of the flattering attentions showered upon the young gentleman, and it was wonderful how many good qualities came to be developed through this new medium.

"Kitty," said Miss Sarah to their staid receptacle of all the news and opinions of Twelfth Street, "you may take this easy chair back to my mother's room; it really makes a very nice bed for my nephew, and I see that his mother has very proper ideas about regular naps."

"How she seemed to relish those potted pigeons," said Miss Grovner. "I think I shall finish copying those receipts after all."

"David's complexion improves wonderfully," continued Miss Sarah; "and Mrs. Seth has promised to see about a set of those worsted aprons from the repository. I'm glad I mentioned them to her. By the way, I heard when I was in there yesterday, that Mrs. Flag is to give a grand ball on the 13th. I suppose we shall have all the particulars from Mrs. Alibone; it is really quite delightful to have her back again. I have quite lost the run of things since she went south."

"It will be very exclusive, no doubt," said Miss Grovner, with a little sigh. "If my brother had but improved his advantages"—

"Who knows?" resumed Miss Sarah. "We might have been going with Mr. and Mrs. Seth."

"I don't think Mary Jane has ever been introduced to Mrs. Flag."

"Who said anything about Mary Jane!" responded her sister, a little tartly. "There are other people in the world! But we need not think of these things now. However, it has turned out better than could have been expected."

"Yes, I think it has, Sarah," said Miss Grovner, thoughtfully; "and perhaps we ought to exert ourselves a little more for Mrs. Seth; she must be dull, poor thing, without any society. Suppose we invite a few friends to meet her next Thursday."

"That is the 13th, the day of the ball. Mrs. Alibone will be engaged, sister."

"Oh, true! Well, we will think about it, Sarah, and talk it over with Kitty. What day would be most convenient for her? We will have some of those trifles she used to like, I remember, when they were first married. I think David has my father's nose decidedly—the Grovner nose—or will have as he gets older. Yes, we really must try to make it a little more cheerful for my brother and his wife, shut up as they must be."

Benevolent Miss Grovner! She had not forgotten her little plan, and was waiting a favorable opportunity to introduce it, the Wednesday following, when Mrs. Alibone called, and was warmly received, as usual, the only drawback to Miss Sarah's enjoyment in the anticipation of hearing all about Mrs. Flag's party being Mrs. Seth's position at the moment she was ushered in; actually sitting on the carpet, for the more effectual amusement of Master Daisy, established on one of Miss Grovner's best bedroom pillows.

"So, you're going to Mrs. Flag's! We supposed so," said Miss Sarah, with itching ears for the communication that was sure to follow.

Mrs. Alibone graciously entered into particulars. She was just tolerated in the Flag set, on account of her connections, she well knew, and *her* triumph was confined to such recitals among those who had not even this *entrée*.

Mrs. Seth listened, with a little smile playing across her fine face now and then, particularly as Mrs. Alibone enlarged on one especial attraction promised, some very fine amateur music, superintended by *Rubelli* himself.

"Short sleeves, with Honiton caps, coming almost to the elbow, and my new ornaments," said Mrs. Alibone, out of breath enumerating the different articles of her showy costume.

"Nobody has asked me what I'm going to

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wear," said Mrs. Seth, looking up demurely, and at the same time saving Daisy's Grovner nose from a bump with a basket-rattle.

"You?" exclaimed her sisters-in-law in a breath.

"Daisy's mamma, me," said Mrs. Seth, quietly. "If mamma's little man can spare her."

"I don't understand," said Miss Sarah, simply.

"We were talking of Mrs. Flag's," added Miss Grovner, by way of explanation, thinking Mrs. Seth had not rightly heard the name.

"I know," said she, very composedly; "Mrs. Flag's."

"Perhaps Mrs. Seth can tell us," resumed Mrs. Alibone, with just the slightest possible expression of scornful incredulity, "who is going to sing with Mrs. Flag the duo from Donizetti's new opera she has had sent to her in manuscript from Paris; that is one great feature of the evening. I wish you could hear Mrs. Flag, with your musical taste, Miss Sarah. Such execution!"

"Daisy's mamma," was the hand-grenade tossed lightly to the astonished group on the sofa. If it had been one in reality, it could not have had a more startling effect. Mrs. Alibone departed suddenly. Her reign was over in Twelfth Street; that was plain to be seen, her late absence from the city accounting for her ignorance of Mrs. Seth Grovner's intimacy in this inner circle of musical amateurs.

If Miss Grovner could have served every delicacy in market on one dinner-table, it would have been done that day, as an ovation to her brother's wife, who was henceforth quoted in Mrs. Alibone's place, and with more expressive unction. Miss Sarah, in process of time, had the unhoped-for pleasure of being in the same room with Mrs. Flag, and hearing her sing at the private musical reunion in her brother's pleasant parlor. She was so much agitated at an unexpected introduction—this was *beyond* her wildest flight of fancy—that she said, "thank you," instead of the response usual on such occasions.

Mrs. Flag has even left a card in Twelfth Street, ever since conspicuously displayed, as you may be sure; and the visitors of the Misses Grovner declare they do not know which they are most tired of, having it pointed out to their notice, or hearing the reiterated mention of the talents and virtues that they have discovered to centre in "my brother's wife."

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LAURA GRAHAME; OR, THE RESULT OF A REVERIE.
De Forest, Virginia
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LAURA GRAHAME; OR, THE RESULT OF A REVERIE.

BY VIRGINIA DE FORREST.

(See Plate.)

LAURA stood where they had left her; Walter's grave and her cousin's gay farewell still rang upon her ears, and Grace's warm kisses still burned upon her lips; she returned their farewell with her usual smiling dignity, and stood motionless, watching their retreating forms until the trees hid them from her eyes. Gradually the smile faded from her lips, and a look of deep, settled sorrow clouded her young face; the easy, dignified attitude was lost in the drooping figure and dejected expression. We will leave her thus, lost in painful reverie, and sketch for our readers her previous history.

Laura Grahame was left an orphan when only three years of age; her father died of consumption, and her mother soon followed him to the grave. Mr. Danvers, her mother's brother, adopted the orphan, and no parents' care could be more tender than her uncle and aunt lavished upon the little Laura. Her father owned large estates in Matanzas, which now became the property of the orphan. When she was about ten years old, her uncle and aunt removed there, with Laura and their only child, Grace, then just seven years of age.

They had been but one year in their new home, when Mrs. Danvers was taken dangerously ill, and the physicians soon pronounced her case hopeless.

It was a darkened room, in which no sound, save the low breathings of the invalid, and the stealthy movements of Moma, the old nurse, could be heard. Laura sat by her aunt's side, holding her fevered hand in one of her own cool ones, while the other was pressed upon the invalid's burning brow. A strange feeling of awe, a vague presentiment of evil, kept her silent.

"Laura," said Mrs. Danvers, in a low feeble tone.

"I am here, dear Aunt Emily. What can I do for you?"

"Nothing, darling. My poor child, you have lost your own mother, and now I, who have tried to fill her place, am about to leave you too."

"Oh, auntie, how can I do without you!" sobbed the child, all her long-restrained grief bursting forth.

"You have been a good, dutiful child, Laura darling, and a great blessing to me; now, you must be a double daughter to your uncle George, and a dear, older sister to my Grace."

"Oh, if I were but older, I would be her mother, as you have been mine!"

"You are old enough, Laura, to exert a great influence over her. She loves you fondly, and you can, by example and affection, lead her to good or evil. You are serious and thoughtful beyond your years, while Grace is light-hearted and gay, but affectionate and frank. Gently guide her, Laura, by love, as I would wish her to go were I here."

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"I will, I will, dear auntie! My own gratification and interests shall always give way before her good."

"Poor Laura! you are young enough to still need a mother's care yourself; but I trust her to you. Remember, she has only you and her father!"

Faithfully did Laura keep the promise made to the dying. Young as she was, she understood the obligations it imposed upon her; and, as she had said, her own interests always gave way before her cousin's. Laura's tasks were learned with double diligence that, when Grace needed assistance in hers, it should be ready for her. There was a warm love between these two motherless ones that naught but death could destroy.

When Laura was about nineteen years old, there came to Matanzas, for his health, a young man, in whom Mr. Danvers was much interested. His father had been for many years Mr. Danvers's partner in business, and Walter Elliot, on the death of his own father, sought and found a firm friend in his former partner. He was a handsome, intelligent young man, a student in a medical college in Philadelphia; but, by too close application to his books, he had injured his health severely, and the physicians ordered a winter in the South. An invitation from Mr. Danvers to pass it with him was gratefully accepted, and Walter was expected every day.

It was a bright clear day in the early part of November, when Walter, pale, sick, and weary with his long sea voyage, arrived at his friend's house. Grace was spending a few weeks in Havana with Mrs. Ellis, an American friend, Mr. Danvers was taking his daily ride, and Laura was alone to receive him. The ride and the exertion of getting from the carriage were too much for the invalid, and he fainted at the door. Laura, terrified at his death-like appearance, stood watching, while Moma had him carried into the parlor, and hastened away to find restoratives. She bent over him, parted the hair from his high white forehead, and assisted Moma in bathing his face, while her whole frame trembled with terror.

When Walter recovered consciousness, the first object that met his gaze was the pale face of his hostess, whose eyes were fixed with deep pity upon him. He tried to thank her, but she placed her tiny hand on his lips, whispering—

"Lie still, and don't try to talk; Moma will stay by you, while I give orders about your room." And, with a smile and graceful courtesy, Laura left him.

Walter's fainting fit was but the beginning of a long illness; he was taken to his room, and for seven weeks did not leave it. Laura insisted upon sharing the fatigue of nursing him with Moma; she it was who prepared his medicines and cooling drinks, and, in his delirium, placed the cloths wet with cold water upon his head; while Moma, who liked to reign supreme in the sick-room, sat watching, with a mixture of admiration and jealousy, the fair usurper of her offices.

Walter had been delirious for several days; but he lay one afternoon in a quiet sleep, from which the doctor thought he would awaken in his senses. Laura took a book and sat by the side of the bed, to be near when he wished for anything, while Moma sat sewing by the window. Walter at length slowly opened his eyes, and fixed them upon the fair reader, who, absorbed in her book, did not see him. He noted all the maiden's beauties; the rich black hair, banded smoothly off her high white forehead; the regular features, clear dark complexion, long jetty eyelashes, that now drooped over the large black eyes; the tall, noble figure, tiny hand, and beautifully rounded arm—all were perfect. He lay watching her for some moments; but Moma, finding he was awake, bustled up to the bed, and Laura withdrew. From that day he grew rapidly better, and many happy hours were spent in that sick-room. Laura read to him, sang to him, and long conversations there were between these two—conversations, during which the young girl's heart was gradually passing into the possession of another.

What wonder that Walter fancied himself in love with the fair girl, who thus devoted her time and talents to his comfort and entertainment? He found her presence would convert that sick-room from a prison into a paradise. (I don't say it did so, but he thought it did.)

At last, one afternoon, when Moma was preparing his evening repast, he won from the happy blushing girl a promise to accompany him to his home in the spring as his bride.

When Laura sought her room that night, her cheek was flushed, her eyes sparkled, and her heart throbbed quickly with excess of happiness. Fastening her door, she knelt and thanked the Giver of all good for the new joy bestowed upon her. Laura's was an earnest, thoughtful nature, and all emotions left an indelible impression upon her heart; she was not one to part with her love lightly, but, once given, it could not be recalled.

Walter was now well enough to be out, and Grace was expected home daily.

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Laura was seated in her own room sewing, when her cousin burst in upon her. Let me pause a moment to describe Grace Danvers. She was a most charming combination of blonde and brunette beauty. Her eyes were dark hazel, shaded by black brows and lashes, while her hair was a light yellowish brown, falling in a profusion of shining curls on her shoulders; her features were regular, and her complexion pure red and white; her figure was *petite*, but most exquisitely rounded, while her hands and feet were tiny as a fairy's.

"Dear Laura!" she cried, as she sprang into her cousin's arms, "I am so glad to be at home again! So, I hear you have been having a sick knight here while I was gone; long letters from a certain cousin of mine not a mile off, full of a handsome squire most dolefully sick, reached me. I saw him at the gate, and, instead of a pale, interesting youth, he struck me as being in a most stupid state of health. Lost your heart, Laura, eh?"

"Nonsense, Grace! You are wild with spirits. How did you leave Mrs. Ellis and Fanny?"

"Well—everybody well! But here comes Mr. Elliot up the avenue; you must introduce me." And, bounding across the room, the gay beauty smoothed her curls, arranged her collar more to her satisfaction, and announced her readiness to be presented to Walter.

The young man gave a start of delighted surprise when his eyes fell upon Grace. Her pale-blue dress, which was cut so as to leave her falling shoulders and round white arms bare, set off to the utmost advantage her exquisite complexion and golden curls; her drive, and the excitement of coming home, gave an additional tinge of color to her cheeks, and her eyes sparkled with animation. Walter bowed gracefully, and they were soon engaged in a lively conversation. Laura left them together, and went to read the papers to her uncle, her regular evening task.

So it began, and so evening after evening it continued. Laura was obliged to devote two or three hours to her uncle, while Grace and Walter took long moonlight walks, or conversed together in the piazza; or her cousin's clear, sweet voice rose and fell on the night air in songs, while a manly tone mingled with the strain, and Grace's guitar accompanied the delicious music.

Day by day, Laura's face grew paler and sadder, and Walter felt that there was no bliss to him like Grace's presence; yet neither dared speak of the change. Laura saw that the love between these two was stronger than Walter's love for her had ever been; but she sickened when she tried to speak of it, and he dared not approach the subject.

It was late one evening, when the cousins had retired to their own room, that Laura noticed how very sad Grace looked. She was pained; for Grace, like Shakspeare's Beatrice, had "little of the melancholy element in her," and Laura knew it was some deep grief that could so cloud her young, joyous face.

"Grace, what troubles you?" she said, drawing the young girl to her side.

"Oh, Laura," sobbed her cousin, "I'm so miserable!"

"Why, darling, what can make you unhappy?"

"I—I—well, I may as well tell you all; perhaps you can comfort me. This evening, while I was walking with Walter, he told me that he loved me"——

"*You*, Grace?"

"Yes; but he is engaged to somebody else! And oh, I love him so much!"

"He should not have told you if he is bound to another."

"He did not mean to tell me; but he loves me so much that he had to let me know it."

"How can he love you and her too?" Laura was astonished at her own calmness.

"He don't *love* her. But he says he was once far away from home, very sick, and she nursed and took care of him, just as you did, Laura, and he fancied he was in love, because he felt so grateful to her, and so he asked her to be his wife. She said she would, and he thinks he is bound by honor to fulfil his engagement. She cannot love him as I do."

"What is her name?"

"He would not tell me; and he asked me never to tell any one what he had told me. But he could not have meant you, Laura, for I tell you everything."

Laura caressed and kissed her cousin, and whispered, "All will be well yet, Grace. Hope and trust!" and then left her.

The next morning she excused herself, on the plea of headache, from accompanying them on their usual ride. She smilingly bid them good-by, and stood on the piazza watching them off. Carlo, her spaniel, bounded after the horses, turning his head as if to bid his mistress farewell. They were gone! Pietro carried her habit to her room again, and she was alone; still, she moved not. There was a fearful struggle in her mind. "Must I give him up?" she murmured. "She is so light-hearted, that she

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would get over this. He is mine, mine! But he loves me not!" Time flew by unheeded by her; she was so absorbed in her reverie that the hours were as minutes. At length she turned and re-entered the house; with tottering steps she regained her room; once there, she gathered all her calmness, wrote and folded a note, carried it herself to Walter's room, and then, again in her own chamber, her task over, she fell, without motion or consciousness, on the floor.

When Walter Elliot returned from his ride, he found upon his table the following note:—

"*Grace has told me all; you are free!*

"LAURA."

When she rejoined them the next morning, she was again calm, dignified, and even cheerful. Walter and Grace never knew the struggle and anguish this had cost our heroine, and Walter said to himself, "She is too cold to love."

Grace went with Walter to his Philadelphia home; Laura stayed with her uncle; when he died, she still kept the house, though part of every year was spent with Grace. Grace's youngest boy was, after much solicitation, permitted to go home to Matanzas with Laura, some few winters since, and Laura—still Laura Grahame—lives still in the old house with him. If you ask her why she was never married, she smiles, shakes her head, and says she was intended for an "old maid," and had to work out her destiny.

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MRS. DAFFODIL AT THE OPERA.
de Forrest, Virginia
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); May 1855; 50, American Periodicals
pg. 438

MRS. DAFFODIL AT THE OPERA.

BY VIRGINIA DE FORREST.

At an early hour, our party, Mr. and Mrs. S., George and myself, started to call for Mrs. Daffodil. As it was a warm pleasant evening, we concluded to walk. Mrs. Daffodil and Euphrosyne were quite ready; and, indeed, from what we learned, had been waiting an hour or two for us. Major Clapperton offered his arm to Mrs. S., Mr. S. took Euphrosyne, George gallanted the widow, and I was left to Pete. The major most politely offered me his other arm, but I preferred my juvenile escort, as it afforded an excuse to walk beside Mrs. Daffodil.

"I 've got my best dress on," said the old lady to me, as we started. "It 's one my poor, dear Daffodil gave me just after we were married; but. Ninny wore her white dress, and rose-buds in her hair, so I put it on."

Even this explanation did not prepare me for the sight which I beheld when Mrs. Daffodil threw off her shawl on entering the theatre. Her dress consisted of a bright yellow silk, made in the time of departed Daffodil's youth. It was extremely short waisted, had large leg-o'-mutton sleeves, and, to add to the effect, the trimming was pale green. A large collar covering her shoulders was fastened at the throat by a green bow, in the middle of which a cheap breast-pin sparkled. Her cap was trimmed with a profusion of green and yellow ribbons, and so covered with artificial flowers that the lace was completely obscured. The look of mortification visible on the major's face showed that he was totally unprepared for such a display of antiquity. Ninny, who sat next her mother, looked quite pretty in her white dress, with a few rosebuds in her fair hair. Pete, who sat behind with the major, wore a gray blouse, with a large linen collar, fastened by a huge crimson bow. His hair was fancifully arranged, probably by Peter Smith, the village barber; it hung in long lank tresses round his head.

"I do so like a theatre," said Mrs. Daffodil; "it 's so light, with the chanticleers suspended all around, and the seats is so easy here, too. I never was at a theatre but once before, when I went to see the 'of course I can, brother.'* The little gal remembers."

I assented, for I had a very lively recollection of the occasion.

The overture commencing at this moment, the old lady was silent until the first scene was over.

"I can't make out a word they 're saying," she said, as Orsini finished "Nella fatal." "What are they making such a noise about?" she continued, as thunders of applause greeted the "divine Sontag." "Who 's the black woman, with her face covered up?"

"That is Sontag—Lucrezia Borgia," said George; "and the applause is to let her know how glad we are to see her."

"Oh, that 's the uproar part, I suppose!" said she.

Again she was all attention until Lucrezia kisses Gennaro as he lies asleep.

"Well, I declare!" she cried, "that young woman ought to be ashamed to be kissing that man right before a whole theatre full of people looking at her. No wonder she covers her face up, if that 's the way she carries on."

Quiet again, until the return of Orsini and his companions.

"What *is* the little boy so mad about?" she asked. "How they all holler at her! It 's another uproar, ain't it?"

"They are reminding her of dreadful crimes she was believed to have committed," said George. "She was supposed to have poisoned many of their relatives."

"Pizened!" said the horrified old lady; "the murdering witch! I wish she 'd take that thing off her face. Why," she cried, as Orsini snatched the mask from Lucrezia's face, "the little fellow heard me. Thank you, my little man!" she continued, in a voice so loud as to attract several glances at our box as the curtain fell.

"Sister, you make yourself ridiculous!" said the major, with a very marked expression of contempt on his face.

"Gracious, how contemptible you look!" said Mrs. Daffodil. "I didn't mean no harm, I 'm sure."

"How are you pleased?" I asked, willing to turn the conversation.

"Well, the dresses is very pretty, except the

* "Corsican Brothers."

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black woman. But I'd like to see my Pete rigged out like that little fellow in the play. I wish they'd talk it though," she added; "it would be easier for them, and a heap better to understand. I can't make nothing of the gibberish they sing."

"And be deprived of those strains of seraphic melody which now greet our enraptured ears?" sighed the fair Euphrosyne.

"My ears ain't wrapped up!" said her mother; "and I wish you'd talk English. You are as puzzling as the play actor fellows. What are you going to do with them flowers?" she said, pointing to a bouquet the major was handing to Mrs. S.

"They are for Lucrezia," said Mrs. S.

"What, the black pizening woman! Well, if that ain't the discouragement of vice and immortality! Major, I 'm ashamed of you, to reward her evil deeds!"

"Hush!" whispered Euphrosyne, as the curtain rose on the second act.

"That is Lucrezia's husband, the Duke Alphonzo," said I, as Badiali entered.

"She 's a married woman," said the old lady, "and carrying on as she does! Sakes alive! what is he pulling off the letters for?" was her next query, as Gennaro struck the B from Borgia.

"He wishes to insult Lucrezia," said George, "and so defaces the name on the door."

"Just like Joe Smith and I," said Pete, leaning forwards. "We was out one night, and had a jolly good time, pulling down signs and ringing bells. We put Dr. Comfort's sign over the tavern, and Toddy's 'Liquor sold here' over Mr. Jenks, the temperance preacher; and stuck the barber's pole in Miss Prim's cantly-shop winder, and Jimmy Dolittle the cobbler's sign over the bricklayer's door; and we rung Mr. Makewell's night-bell till he came down in a fine rage, and then we run off. Weren't it fun! Didn't ma wallop me, though!"

"What 's the juke scolding his wife for?" said Mrs. Daffodil, who had been gazing with puzzled attention on the stage. "There 's that young man again, Juncairo. That 's the row, is it? Give it to her, juke; she desarves it," she cried.

"Hold your tongue, sister," said the major. "You make too much noise."

"Oh, they want all the uproar to themselves, I suppose. There, everybody in the house is making a noise," she said, triumphantly, as the sovereign people testified their approval of the trio.

Again the curtain fell.

"Well, I can't see into it," said Mrs. Daffodil. "What was in the bottle she gave him?"

"An antidote for the poison the duke gave him," I said.

"The juke? The woman, you mean! Why, the juke was as pleasant as could be."

"Nevertheless, it was the duke who poisoned him, and Lucrezia who saved his life."

"What did he pizen him for?" she asked.

"Because he suspected him of loving his wife."

"Well, he'd a heap better lock his wife up, and not let her go running about after fellers, than to pizen the poor young men when she catches them. Why, he was fast asleep when she kissed him; and just now she only waited till the juke was gone, and then she was right on her knees to him."

"She was imploring him to leave the duke's dominions."

"Well, I 'm glad she sent him off."

Mrs. Daffodil listened with grave attention to the next act, which was increased to a frightened interest as the mysterious voices came from behind the curtain.

"Well, I declare," she cried, as Lucrezia again appeared, "if there ain't the black woman after the young man again! She don't let him have a minute's peace. What is she saying now?"

"She tells them that they are all poisoned, in revenge for the insults they offered her, you remember, in the first act," said George.

"I remember! Gracious, the young man 's going to kill her! She desarves it; but——no, he ain't!" she said, with a sigh of relief, as Gennaro dropped the knife. "But what is she singing about now? There 's the little bottle again."

"She 's begging him to take the antidote again, and he refuses, because there is not enough for his companions."

"Has she pizened him again? Why, she must think he 's got as many lives as a cat. Ain't he a powerful long time dying? There, he 's dead! No, he ain't; he 's up on his arm, singing away as loud as ever. There, he 's down; and now he 's up, at it again. Well, I hope his singing so at his last moments won't be taken into the 'count against him. He don't seem to know how to talk. Poor thing!" she said, as Sontag's impassioned acting brought tears to her eyes. "I can't tell what she says; but she does seem to feel very bad. I declare, that man is as hard to kill as an eel! They 're both singing now. How can she sing, if she feels so bad? There, he 's dead! There 's the juke; what 's she saying to him?"

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"She is telling him that the young man is her son."

"Her son!"

"Yes, by a former marriage."

"Poor thing! how I pity her! I should feel dreadful, if I 'd pizened Pete."

"How did you like the music, Mrs. Daffodil?" asked Mr. S., as we left the theatre.

"I didn't notice it much," was the answer. "I was trying to find out what the furren talk was; I couldn't make much of it. I don't think I like that juke much. He really looked as if he liked it, when she swoonded, after giving her son the anecdote."

"The harmonious strains of the seraph could scarcely afford more delightful pleasure than the dulcet notes of this exquisite cantatrice," said Euphrosyne.

"She wasn't a candytreese," said her mother; "her name was Loucraterser, if it 's the black woman you 're talking about."

"Do you admire the Italian school?" inquired George of Euphrosyne.

"She never went to it, sir," said her mother. "She never went to no school but Miss Slither's; she went there for all the eddication she 's got."

"All music is to me like a dream of the spheres of bliss," said Euphrosyne.

"Will you accompany us to Taylor's, Mrs. Daffodil?" asked Mr. S.

"Thank you," said she; "but I never buy anything at the tailor's; all Pete's clothes are made at home."

On being made to understand the nature of Taylor's establishment, she accepted Mr. S.'s invitation, while the major apologized for her mistake.

"Shall I order some Charlotte Russe for you, Mrs. Daffodil?" asked George.

"No, I thank you," said the old lady, rather indignantly. "I ain't a hannibal, to be eating Charlottes, or Susans either, for that matter."

She consented to partake of a cream and some cake, and, at her own door, wished us a very sleepy good-night, while her cordial "Thank you, ma'am, I 'm sure I 'm very much obliged to you," sounded far more grateful to our ears than the polite, tedious apology the major thought necessary to add to his thanks for what he termed his sister's eccentricities.

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MRS. DAFFODIL AT THE THEATRE.
DE'FORREST, VIRGINIA
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Oct 1854; 49, American Periodicals
pg. 338

MRS. DAFFODIL AT THE THEATRE.

BY VIRGINIA DE' FORREST.

A WINTER or two ago, I went to see Mr. Brooke in the "Corsican Brothers." As I had seen the play several times before, I had more amusement from the following *rencontre* than I should have had had I wished to direct my attention wholly to the stage.

As the theatre was somewhat crowded, my friend Mr. K., who accompanied me, was only able to procure two seats on the third bench for our accommodation. Just as the curtain rose, two women and a little boy entered and took the vacant seats next us. One of the women, an elderly dame, who seated herself next me, was attired in an old brown silk dress, a flaming red shawl, with bright yellow and green flowers sprinkled over it, and a cap with a broad border and profusely trimmed with green ribbons; in her hand she held a black silk bonnet, which she covered with a handkerchief as soon as she was seated. After comfortably placing herself on the seat, she gave me an emphatic poke, saying—

"Are we come too late?"

"The curtain has just risen, madam," I replied.

"What?" said she, evidently not understanding me.

"The performance has just commenced," I said, as politely as I could.

"Oh, you mean the play's just begun. Ninny, the play's just begun," continued she, speaking to her companion. "Pete, don't you crowd so."

Pete, the little boy I have mentioned, made the fifth on a seat intended for four. Presently I felt another poke—

"Who's the chap in the velvet jacket?" asked the old lady.

"That is Mr. Brooke," I replied.

"What is his make-believe name?"

"Fabien."

"Queer name, ain't it? Won't you let me look through your big spectacles?"

My big spectacles! Now, I am rather near-sighted, and, at the theatre I generally wear spectacles; although at that time I was a mere child, still I had them on. I looked at Mr. K. with an inquiring glance.

"She means the lorgnette, Annie." Then, seeing the old lady's astonished look, he politely

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handed her the opera-glass, saying, "Do you wish to use the lorgnette, madam?"

"A hornet! Well, it's a queer-looking thing; but it don't look much like a hornet."

Her endeavors to adjust the glass to her eye were truly ludicrous. First shutting her right eye, she applied one barrel to the left; then she reversed it, using the right and shutting the left eye; then she tried both. Then, taking off her own green spectacles, she used the opera-glass alone; and then, in utter despair, she turned again to me—

"How on earth do you fix it?"

I showed her how to adjust the glass to her eye, and she tried again; but, after several fruitless efforts, gave it up.

"Won't you let me see the paper?" was the next request.

I handed her the play-bill, and was beginning to feel rather annoyed; but Mr. K. whispered—

"They are somebody's country cousins, Annie, and this is their first visit to the theatre. You have got to be victimized; so bear it good-naturedly, as I do." And a saucy look of mock resignation completed the sentence.

"Suppose we change seats?" suggested I, rather maliciously.

"Thank you! I am very comfortable here."

Another poke recalled me to my sense of martyrdom.

"How do you find the names on this?" asked my tormentor.

I explained, and she continued—

"Well, after you've found them, how do you know the fellers apart?"

"*I* know the cast of the play, madam," I replied.

"Oh, you do? Know them all by heart, do you? Well, I had sights rather have you tell me about them than find them myself," said she, returning the play-bill.

Here was a prospect! and the satisfaction evident on the old lady's face showed she meant to act upon the idea; and she did. Another poke, and—

"Who's that woman in black pretending to be?" aroused me again.

"That is Fabien's mother," I replied.

"Looks rather young, don't she! What a sight of talking they all do! Pete, do sit still!"

At length the ghost arose through the floor, and the old lady seized my arm and trembled like a leaf.

"That old lady won't sleep a wink to-night," whispered Mr. K. to me.

A long sigh of relief from my neighbor announced the fall of the curtain.

"I don't exactly understand it; do you?" said she, turning to me.

"Oh, yes; I have seen it before; and you will understand it better after you have seen the next act," said I.

"My! you've seen it all before, have you? Well, do tell us something about it. This," she continued, pointing to the young girl, her companion, "is my daughter Euphrosyne; but I always call her 'Ninny' for short; and this boy is Jupiter, but I call *him* Pete. They are my two children. I'm a widow woman, and my name's Mrs. Daffodil. But do tell us something about the part that's coming."

"It will be much more interesting if you let the plot work itself out, madam," said my friend Mr. K., who wanted to release me for a spell.

"Well, who wants to hinder it? I only want the little gal to tell me something about it."

"You had much better watch the actors when the curtain rises again," said Mr. K.

"Well, I suppose I must, if you won't let her tell me. You're her dad, I s'pose?"

Now, Mr. K. is a bachelor, about thirty-two years old, who prides himself on his youthful appearance; and to be taken for the father of a girl of thirteen or fourteen years old was a terrible cut to his vanity. He was silent.

"You see," said Mrs. Daffodil, "my brother, the major, was at our house last night, and he asked me if I'd ever been to the theatre; and, when I said 'No,' he said 'Sakes alive! well, I'll pay for your seats, if you will go with Pete to-morrow.' Well, Ninny and I, we talked it over; and, as we don't get such an offer every day, we concluded to come. 'Ninny,' says I, 'if your uncle will pay for seats, we should be foolish not to come.' 'Yes, mother,' says she; 'for, you know'"——

Here the rising of the curtain for the second act interrupted the narrative, which, however, she graciously promised to finish in the next interval. You are probably aware that, in this drama, Mr. Brooke sustains two characters, Louis and Fabien, who are supposed to be twin brothers. My neighbor evidently did not know this, and I was presently assailed with—

"What's that feller's make-believe name?"

"That's Louis, the ghost we saw in the first act."

"Sakes alive! come to life again! Well, I declare to gracious! but ain't he wonderful like t'other feller, Fabbin?"

"They are twin brothers," I answered.

"What, *really?*"

"Oh, no; only make-believe."

"I guess they're some relation though," said

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she, sagaciously; "they 're powerful alike. Who 's the tall feller talking to the woman in pink?"

"That 's Mr. Richings, or Monsieur de Chateau Reneau."

"*Who?*" inquired Miss Ninny.

"He 's got a powerful long name, Ninny."

There was a cessation of questions until the duel scene.

"Why, they did this all before!" exclaimed Mrs. Daffodil.

When the curtain fell, I felt a nudge in the side, and, turning round, saw Mrs. Daffodil offering me an enormous chunk (it can be called by no other name) of gingerbread.

"No, I thank you," said I.

"Now, do take it," urged the old lady; "there 's plenty more in the basket, and I know you 'll like it. It 's my own baking."

Again I declined as politely as I could for laughing, and the cake was handed on to Mr. K., who also declined.

"I wonder if one could get a cup of tea or anything to drink here?" was her next inquiry. "Gingerbread 's wonderful dry when there ain't nothing to wash it down with. Pete, go see if you can't find something to drink."

"No, no," said I, alarmed; "you cannot procure anything of the kind here."

There was a pause, passed by the old lady in eating and cogitating.

"Acting 's all a kind of lying, ain't it?" said she, suddenly.

"There is no intention to deceive, madam," said I.

"Why, I 'd a been certain them two men were brothers. They were powerful alike. I never shall believe but what they 're related, though. You Pete, quit scrouging!"

When Fabien appeared in the third act, I heard Ninny inquire—

"Who is that now, ma?"

"That 's Louis," said Mrs. Daffodil, in a positive way.

"No it ain't," exclaimed Pete; "it 's Fabien. He says so."

"Hold your tongue, Pete!" cried his mother. "I 'll ask the little gal. Who is that man, Miss?" she continued, turning to me.

"That is Fabien," replied I, delighted with her evident mystification.

"Sakes alive! My, but they are powerful alike! I can't see, for the life of me, how you know them apart. He 's going to kill the tall feller with the long name, ain't he?"

"Yes; he has come to avenge his brother's death."

Her astonishment increased when the ghost appeared again. She evidently did not understand a single word of the plot.

"You stay to the farce, I suppose?" said I, as the curtain fell.

"Oh, yes! we want our money's worth. Why don't you stay? Well, if you are going, good-by. They be powerful alike though, to be sure."

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MY MOTHER-IN-LAW.
Perkins, Patience
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Jan 1855; 50, American Periodicals
pg. 47

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW.

BY PATIENCE PERKINS.

I AM the *late* Patience Price, immortal by my history of "My Brother Tom," published originally in this magazine, translated and cockneyized in England, and reproduced in this country as an English affair.* I married a widower with ten children. If you wish to know *why*, ask my brother Tom, and he will tell you. So much for my antecedents; now for "My Mother-in-Law."

I flatter myself that I have common sense; even my brother Tom admits *that*, as a general rule, though he cites exceptional circumstances. I do know enough to retire into the house when it rains, or to take an omnibus, or spread an umbrella. I have seen children before to-day; if never any of my own, actual own, all those of my sister's (not a few), and my husband's ten by a former connection; and I do think that my husband's mother might give me credit for some capacity. If marrying a man with ten children is any proof of imbecility, as some people pretend, mother-in-law should, at any rate, be the last to reproach me with it.

I do not know how good a medlar among fruits may be, but I do know that a meddler in one's household affairs is intolerable. I do not know precisely what the first Mrs. Perkins died of, but if ever a coroner's jury sits upon me, or if the doctor makes a true return to the superintendent of the health-office, I know the verdict in the one case, or the report in the other, will be—"an overdose of mother-in-law." Mr. Perkins, my dear lord and master, is well enough, perhaps I should say, very well. I don't think he killed his first wife, but I do hope I shall never be required to declare, upon oath, what are my firm convictions upon the subject. It might make a disturbance in the family.

If the woman was born for a plague, she is fulfilling her mission. Such a peaked face! Such a long neck! Such lengthened sourness, long drawn out! Such a lean and hungry look! If she were anybody but my husband's mother, I could appeal to him for protection; but I cannot ask the man to rise in rebellion against his own flesh and blood, the author of his being. I wish she could be content with the original production, and not imagine that he needs her continual supervision, as an author supervises new editions, and makes alterations in every one!

My welcome to the house was a damper. Perkins, before his marriage, never let me see his mother. Widowers are prompt and artful. Let them but breathe on a maiden with intent to capture, the proverb says, and the end is sure. The fascination of a serpent, exerted upon a bird,

* See "Godey's Lady's Book" for May, 1852.

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is not more certain. I am half inclined to accuse my husband of duplicity—of obtaining a wife under false pretences; the second offence, too, the monster! A man's children we expect to be plagued with; and perhaps the escape from early nursing, Godfrey's cordial, Dalby's carminative, teething, and all that sort of thing, is quite an equivalent for any inconvenience which may grow out of being a mother at second hand, with a family capital all ready to commence married life upon. But why did not the creature tell me that he was to be taken with this other and extra incumbrance? Why is not the marriage-service altered to meet such cases, thus: "I, Patience, take thee, Timothy [and thy mother], to my wedded husband [and mother-in-law], to have and to hold"—and the rest of it? I am sure I have and hold more, by two-thirds, of the mother than of the son. Oh, poor me!

My welcome, as I said, was a damper. She kissed me heartily enough—too heartily—for she smelt horribly of snuff. She tasted of it, indeed; and if I could believe that any woman ever put powdered tobacco in her mouth, instead of in the proper place—if the nose even *is* that proper place—she is that person. She turned me round and round, and looked me all over with most wonderful *nonchalance*. She wondered whether my eyes were black or dark hazel, suggested caps as part of the toilet of the mother of ten children, and desired to know my Christian name, as she intended to be very kind and very motherly. "Besides," she said, "I am Mrs. Perkins, and one Mrs. Perkins is enough in a house." Perkins winced a little at this, for it was not the first time that she had told him so. When I answered that my name was Patience, she said—"Patience! Humph! You are well named, for you will have a time of it. But la, dear, we must be cheerful, and begin with a cup of tea." And such a pleasant look as she put on to second her invitation! Her face is the habitual incarnation of lamentations, and when she attempts a smile, her features are so unused to it that it seems more like a twist of pain than an expression of pleasure.

"You *will* have a time of it," she repeated, for my encouragement, as she placed me at the head of the table, behind a wilderness of cups and saucers, and other tea and toast paraphernalia. "There 's no company to-night, Patience; just *ourselves!*"

She watched with a hope for *contretemps* as I proceeded to tea and toast the little multitude, but I survived it. I have learned since that, with *malice prepense*, she trusted to disgust and force me to surrender to her at discretion. The next morning at breakfast she hoped to reap the fruits of her manœuvre.

"Well, Patience," she said, "will you sit at the waiter, or shall I?" (with a motion toward that coveted post—a dignity perhaps, but no sinecure.) "Now, or never," thought I, and slipped into the seat, with a determination to assert my prerogative once for all.

"Well, then, I must tell you," says mother-in-law, "Mr. Perkins does not take much cream, Tim don't take sugar, James don't take cream, Will don't take either, Tom has milk and water, Sally has milk, Jane drinks water, John mustn't have coffee, and you are not to give Ruth any butter, Susy has milk and water, sweetened, and Lizzie mustn't have hot bread."

"Well," said I, having dispatched Mr. Perkins's cup, "what does grandmother take?"

You should have seen her eyes! There were the scintillations of fourteen furies in them. "Who? Oh, yes, I understand. I—oh, never mind *me!* I'm nobody!" And then she sobbed and sniffled, and Mr. Perkins was in an unwonted state of excitement, and the children exchanged winks and smiles, and I—sat still. If a woman with ten grandchildren in one lot, to say nothing of their probable cousins, is not entitled to the honored name of grandmother, pray who is?

So breakfast passed. Mother-in-law recovered her serenity before the meal was over. Husband—dear me, what a word that is for *me* to write!—husband went about his business, and mother-in-law undertook to invest me with the power of the keys, enlivening our progress through the establishment with some very interesting remarks. "Mr. Perkins is a very fine man, my dear, though I am his mother who says it—a very fine man; but he has a dreadful temper, and you must not let him get set against you. He is very easy to please, but you must be particular to get up his shirts carefully, for he will storm like an earthquake at a missing button. He is not at all difficult about his table, but things must be served up right, or he will not eat them. I'm his mother, and am used to his ways. He is very neat and careful, but he never puts anything away, and will keep a person picking up after him all the time; and he wants everything he calls for brought to him just to a minute. He is not at all hard to please when one knows him, only it takes all your thoughts to do it; but I'm used to that."

This was a pleasant introduction, certainly, to my marital duties. "Then there's the children," she continued; "a nice family as one need desire. But the oldest, that's Timothy, *has* picked up some bad habits. He will swear

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dreadfully, but he's a good boy for all that. And James, that's the second son, is a fine lad, and willing; but you must not expose him to temptation by leaving loose money about. Willy is a healthy and well-doing boy in the main, but he likes to creep into the store-room. As sure as he eats a handful of raisins, and he will do it when he can, he goes into convulsions. Tom is quiet, but dreadful mischievous sometimes; and there's no harm in the girls, except that they quarrel, as all children will, and won't take care of their clothes; no children do. And John, he plagues them almost to death, and Mr. Perkins has no government over any of them, and you'll have to do it all, my dear; but you must not be discouraged. *I'm here*, and if they don't mind, just turn them over to me!"

Do you wish to know what I did? Go marry yourself to a widower, ten children, and a mother-in-law; place yourself, a foreign substance, among three generations of cognates, and you'll find out. I "just naterally," as they say out west, went to my room, threw myself on the bed, and cried. Tears won't provide a dinner, I know, and I knew it then; but I did not imagine that any one expected that I should fall at once into providing for the household—I, a stranger, and in a strange place—oh, how strange! I don't know how long I laid there in my half sleep, half sob. Presently I heard "Mother!" screamed in childish treble—"Mother!" growled in the hobbledehoy accent—"Mother" whined —"Mother!" shouted—"Mother!" piped—"Mother! Mother!! Mother!!!"

"Who is that wretch of a mother?" I said, angrily, as I bounced from the bed to the glass, and then laved away the traces of my tears. "Who is the wretch, and why don't she answer?" I did not dream that *I* could be meant. "What *is* the matter?" I asked, opening the door and running out, to find seven or eight of the Perkins young fry sitting on the stairs. "Who calls?"

"It's all of us," said the oldest, as spokesman for the whole. "Grandmother said we were to call you mother."

"But she did not tell you to set up such a horrid concert, did she? If she did, I forbid it. Call me mother, and I'll try to be one; but never shout the word again, or call me at all when you are near enough for me to hear you speak in your natural voice. Come to me when you want me. Where is your grandmother?"

"She went out, and said she would not be in till dinner; and there's no dinner getting ready, and nothing to eat, and we're all hungry."

"Go then and eat anything you can find."

"But everything is locked up, and you have the keys. Grandmother said so before she went out."

"Oh, she did, did she?" said I, laughing, and running down stairs over a score of legs and arms. Now I saw the conspiracy. The pantry was speedily unlocked, and the key has not been in the door since. Leaving the children to discuss their lunch, I walked on to the kitchen. There sat a great lump of a cook, with her feet in the ashes, and her face turned to me with an expression which said, "now for a battle!" "Where's your fire," said I, "and what's for dinner?"

"Sure yourself, that's the new musthress must tell me what. The ould musthress tould me I was to do nothing till you dirhected."

"Did she? And why did you not come to me hours ago?"

"Sure, I was tould to wait till you bid me."

"Well, then, I do bid you. Pick up your movables and leave the house. Call in the evening, and Mr. Perkins's mother will pay you your wages." The girl stared, as if doubting her senses. "Come! move! You are in my way!" And she did move, muttering something about upstarts, which I did not heed. As my first order and last to that individual was obeyed, I cared not with how little grace she did it. I heard her stop to speak to the children in the pantry. The sound of my footsteps approaching was enough, and she was off. "Come, children," I said, "what's to be had? Your father will be home to dinner presently, and we must have it up in a hurry."

Each did his or her part, highly amused at what they considered a good frolic. One did one thing, and another something else. The boys brought fuel and water; the girls discovered the edibles and comestibles. A fine dish of ham and eggs, a cold joint, a pie—a decidedly picnic affair—were served up to the moment. Perkins came in, and we twelve were seated in the best possible humor of pleased excitement. I had found my way straight to the hearts of the children, and had no fears for the rest.

Mother-in-law walked in as we were enjoying ourselves. A strange expression of disappointment came over her face at seeing everything so comfortable. "I ought to make you an apology for being late," she said; "but I made allowances for a young housekeeper, and did not think you could be so punctual." "No thanks to you," thought I, but I said nothing. No sooner was mother-in-law down to the table than she was up again, and calling "Charlotte," at the head of the kitchen stairs.

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"What is the matter?" I asked.

"That stupid girl of ours! She has put on a dirty table-cloth, and the old knives and the steel forks; and there's no spoon for the gravy—and this is stale bread—and—and—I'm sure my son can't abide such a table!"

"Then it must be me that he finds fault with. I dismissed Charlotte three-quarters of an hour ago, at which time she had not taken a step towards dinner. Since then, the children and I have got up this, such as it is, *impromptu*."

"And a very good dinner, too," said Perkins. "I don't desire a better."

Mother-in-law gave him an angry glance, and then, turning to me, said, with forced composure—

"You don't mean that you have turned a girl out of doors, without warning, who has lived here five years!"

"I did not use physical force certainly, but I did employ very powerful moral suasion. We are too strong in young girls to tolerate kitchen impertinence."

Such was the *coup d'état*, or rather *coup de cuisine*, with which I inaugurated myself. It was effectual. Mother-in-law was completely checkmated, and my authority was established. Perkins is a sensible man. Widowers generally are experienced and wise. As a matter of prudent investment, let me recommend the young lady who has love to lay out, to expend it upon a widower, if one is to be had. Such is my experience. My husband left the whole house to my management, and I must say that I have succeeded wonderfully. The children are not at all the nuisances that their affectionate grandparent represented them. Indeed, they have become, in a couple of years, quite models, so Perkins says, and he knows them best, of course. I stick to my text. I had rather have twenty children all "mothering" me at once, than one brother Tom.

But the mother-in-law—oh, dear! She is the thorn in my side. I can't discharge her as I did the girl, or manage her as I can the children. Perkins talks of buying her an annuity, that she may set up housekeeping on her own account. I almost wish he would—and yet I don't want her to get up a grand claim for sympathy on the plea that I have separated mother and child, turned her out of doors, and twenty other horrid things, as she would be sure to do.

* * * * * * * * *

It is three months since I saw the preceding till now. I opened my portfolio this fine May morning. Do you know the world looks very cheerful to me now? I have a new stake in it. As I said, I opened my papers, and have been quite amused at my own nonsense about the old lady, which I had really entirely forgotten. Family cares put the pen aside, and authorship, letters to friends even, are quite unheeded. But I may just remark, by way of conclusion, that mother-in-law has become useful as well as ornamental. She thinks herself indispensable. Well, I've no objection. Employment keeps her out of mischief, and I give her the baby to hold.

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"ONLY A FAMILY PARTY.": A STORY FOR THE NEW YEAR.
Neal, Alice B
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Jan 1855; 50, American Periodicals
pg. 22

"ONLY A FAMILY PARTY."

A STORY FOR THE NEW YEAR.

BY ALICE B. NEAL.

"It is so delightful to have an eccentric old uncle, immensely wealthy! Isn't it, Mr. Cooper?"

"Aw!" returned that individual, languidly, but with a grimace of the most profound admiration at the young creature hanging on his arm.

"To make you elegant birthday presents," continued the sylph in white tarleton tunics. "I've just been looking at Madeline's superb diamond cross. And then he is sure to die one day, and leave you—everything."

"With a naturally bad constitution, and a taste for—awa—quack medicines and water-cures," suggested Mr. Cooper, forming a given angle with his extremely thin arm, as he adjusted his eye-glass.

"Shocking!" Miss Belmont's simper and toss of her sandal-wood fan, on the opposite wing of her partner, proved how deeply her sense of propriety was offended.

"It 's such a trifling obligation—the debt of nature," pursued Mr. Cooper, "and my uncle is such a strict man of business, that really it 's a wonder he has declined payment so long, ah." And, not condescending to laugh at his own sally, the young gentleman's manner showed very plainly that he expected his companion to be extremely amused.

"*Méchant!*" murmured the sylph, holding up a most delicately gloved hand in playful menace.

"Particularly when he has such a respectable nephew and namesake, quite ready to take charge of his money-bags."

"And empty them," suggested Miss Belmont.

"With the aid of some fair hand," returned her suitor, with weak gallantry, "which is already pledged for the present Redowa."

In a minute more the two stood in that close embrace most reprehensible in private, even proffered by an intimate friend, but entirely sanctioned in public opinion on the floor of a saloon, from the stranger of a five minutes' introduction.

The *tête-à-tête* was all very well, the remarks being quite as respectful as young America usually indulges in towards its elders and betters; all very well in its way, but that it had unfortunately been overheard by the individual in question, the wealthy and eccentric uncle himself.

Imagine the tranquil state of mind with which a precise, kind-hearted, but somewhat choleric gentleman of sixty listened to this delectable dialogue. Mortimer Cooper, Jr., as he had named his card and office plate to be engraved, would not have "wriggled" with such wonderful *abandon* through his favorite dance, had he been aware of the turn Mortimer Cooper, Sen.'s meditations were taking.

"The young dog! the young rascal! And there 's Miss Madeline and her diamond cross; wonder how *she* speculates on post-obits? Bless my soul, how fast her tongue goes!"

Mortimer Cooper, better known on 'Change than in the precincts of a ball-room, was for the first time in his life guilty of becoming an intentional eavesdropper. A sudden dive into the reception-room, a cross tack through the conservatory, and he stood behind the fragrant screen of lemon-trees, in front of which Miss Madeline and her escort criticized the dancers.

"A good thing Mort's going to make of it," remarked the scion of the house of Livingston, as the frantic couple dashed for a moment into full view. "Old Belmont 's sure to cut up handsomely."

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"Not that Mortimer need care for money with *his* expectations," returned the fair Madeline, thereby insinuating her own.

"Queer old chap, that uncle of yours." Mr. Livingston evidently understood the delicate allusion. "Quite extraordinary, 'pon my honor." Not being troubled with an excess of the last-mentioned article, Mr. Livingston, like many another threatened insolvent, drew largely upon a fabulous capital. "Not likely to marry, eh?"

"Oh, no!" Miss Cooper indignantly repulsed the unthought-of calamity. "Some fortunate disappointment in early life—fortunate for *us*, you know—I've heard mamma say. A *mésalliance*, or something of that sort, broken off by the family, and a romantic Abelard constancy."

It could not be possible that the aristocratic mouth was curled by a sneer! The shrug of the fair *uncovered* shoulders was undeniable. The pendant boughs of shrubbery rustled with the slight contact, and the lemon-blossoms gave out an unnatural oppressive odor, it seemed to the listener ensconced behind them. And she, his cherished niece, the constant recipient of boundless favors, the embodiment of sensibility, and with his diamond cross sparkling in her bosom, could speak so lightly of what had seared his youth and darkened his manhood! Perhaps he had been mistaken in the manner; and then he had been so seldom in society of late years, he must make allowance for the flippancy which seemed the order of the day.

"Oh ho!" resumed the sapient Charles Augustus Livingston; "sentimental and all that; quite antediluvian—quite as much so as his tailor."

This, tingling in the ears of a gentleman of the old *régime*, in neckerchief of the finest lawn, and a frill of unimpeachable delicacy!

"Quite a Noah, isn't he?" How they both simpered at their mutual excessive brilliancy! "But then, you know, one must put up with eccentricities, though one blushes behind one's fan, where so much is to be looked for. Poor uncle Mortimer, his health is really wretched!"

And this was the niece who nursed him so affectionately, listened with such sweetness and patience to the catalogue of his numerous infirmities, prepared such soothing confections, and embroidered such comfortable slippers! It was a wonder the colloquists were not startled by his involuntary groan at these mortifying reflections, knowing, as he did, that this fashionable niece and nephew, with their aristocratic mamma, owed literally everything to him, their very income, as well as the success they met with in society, from the report of his will made in their favor.

"Dear uncle, do wrap yourself up well, it's shocking cold," exclaimed Miss Cooper, encountering her respected relative in the dressing-room.

"Ugh!" groaned the old gentleman from behind the turned-up fur collar of his travelling-cloak. His niece and the sylph had thrown over their gossamer draperies opera cloaks, in the latest style, scarcely coming to the waist. Their elaborate *coiffures* were *shaded* by tasselled rigolettes, with about as much warmth as a flounce of lace. The open-work silk stockings and satin slippers were shielded by ornamental Polish carriage-boots. A good lamb's-wool stocking drawn over them would have been much more to the purpose.

"Ugh!" ejaculated uncle Mortimer, again, as his affectionate nephew volunteered his Highland shawl. "Keep it yourself, my boy; you'll need all you have."

Whether he referred to wraps, brains, or pocket-money was questionable, from the grimace which followed the remark. Mortimer, Jr., thought only of the first, and considered it a new proof of his uncle's attachment to his future heir.

"Do have the window up, Mortimer; think of uncle's poor chest!" almost shrieked the niece, as they entered the carriage.

"And do, uncle, take the carriage," screamed both, as the unusually taciturn old gentleman discharged it, on arriving at their maternal residence, and strode away on foot to his own lodgings in cold and darkness.

The brother and sister surveyed each other anxiously, by the light of the turned down gas-burner in the hall.

"Some whim," nodded the rigolette, till the little crowd of tassels danced again. "What a supper-table, Mort! Not a decent thing—not even a *mille fruits!*"

"And that champagne! Bah! Livingston and I emptied our glasses into the spittoon."

Meantime, Uncle Mortimer ploughed along through the deserted streets, making a vehement gesticulation now and then, which would have arrested the attention of the watchman, had there been any abroad such an unpleasant night. But, as there was none, he proceeded in unmolested reverie. The old gentleman was apparently "making up his mind to something," making it up "good and strong," while he was about it. Perhaps it was to marry, after all, and so cut off the succession. Who could tell?

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But all this fierce ebullition ended, apparently, in invitations to a New Year's dinner party, the cards, for they were quite formal, dating from a certain number in Fifth Avenue. "What could it mean?" said Mrs. Cooper, the mamma, in her French morning-gown and cap. Time had touched her so gently, and the milliner retouched so skilfully, that she seemed scarcely older than her daughter. Quite attractive enough to give some currency to the report that the widow had laid siege, at no very late period, to the hand of her wealthy and eccentric brother-in-law.

"It can't be possible he is at last going to give up those remote lodgings and take a house. 197! My dear, it must be that new stone front next to the Belmonts."

"Oh, mamma! And he *can't* be going to live there all alone; it's a perfect hotel."

"Palace," corrected Mrs. Cooper. "Do walk by there to-day, and see if there are any signs of its having been taken. But here comes Adele now; she will be sure to know."

"The *strangest* thing!" exclaimed Miss Belmont, throwing a card of invitation on the table beside their own. "From your uncle! And he's taken that house next to ours. Why, it's magnificent! far the handsomest one in the block. Why didn't you tell me, you mean creature, that you were coming to live there?"

A significant look passed between mother and daughter.

"Uncle is so very peculiar, you know, and wished it kept so quiet." Of course, he must have wished it, since he had not told even them; but *that* they did not mention.

"And Gus Livingston has one too," said Miss Belmont. "He was at our house last evening."

"Quite a family party," said Mrs. Cooper, significantly.

Both the young ladies felt themselves called upon to look conscious. If there had been any doubt of Mr. Livingston's intentions, this public instalment in the Fifth Avenue palace would certainly bring matters to a crisis. As for Miss Belmont, she surely would not say nay to the probable future possessor of its glories.

"I am so impatient to have you there, I declare!" said Miss Belmont. "How are the drawing-rooms to be furnished?"

Here was a poser. But Mrs. Cooper, quicker than her daughter in those little deceits which are called "tact" in society, affected the mysterious—

"It would not do to spoil uncle's surprise. We shall have to wait and see."

"Nine days!" sighed Miss Belmont. "To-morrow is only the 24th. What are you going to do Christmas? We have only a stupid family party. I wish, Addy, that you and Mortimer would come around in the evening and help get up a little dance."

"Madeline would be delighted," said Mrs. Cooper, quickly; "and she could answer for Mortimer." A family party at the Belmonts! What a step gained for her ingenuous son! And how thoughtful in Uncle Mortimer to ask Mr. Livingston for New Year's!

Miss Cooper volunteered to escort her friend home, that she might have the pleasure of passing by 197, and inspecting its outer glories at least. It never had seemed so imposing before; and, true enough, the workmen were busy fastening a silver door-plate, engraved with "Cooper," to one of the richly carved panels.

"So odd in uncle! I long to see him, and find out all about it," said the young lady, as she carried her report home to her expectant mamma.

"I should have thought he might have consulted us—at least our taste." And Mrs. Cooper looked around her small, but elegant apartments, where every inch of room and every article of furniture were made the most of.

"But uncle has excellent taste," said the younger lady, thinking of her diamond cross. "We must certainly give a ball, mamma, as soon as we get fairly settled. I long for evening to come!"

But evening did not bring Mr. Cooper, nor even Christmas day, though he sent a pretty gift to each of the family, as he always had done, excusing himself on the plea of unusual haste in business; the whole week, in fact, the first since the death of Madeline's father, passed without so much as a call from him.

"He doesn't want to be teazed about the home," said Mrs. Cooper, as Madeline commented on this unusual absence. "You know how odd he always was, and he chooses to make the surprise as complete as possible." But, for all that, she had an undefined uneasiness she could not account for to herself, and did not even mention to her children.

Mortimer Cooper, Jr., purported to be a lawyer by profession; but, save the legal business of his relative, a very small share of "practice" fell to his lot. The office was a comfortable smoking-room. It had been handsomely fitted up by the ever kind uncle when he was first admitted to the bar, and was a capital lounging-place for all "the fellows" of his particular set. They talked over this singular "palatial" freak of the Senior, with their feet on the grate, help-

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ing themselves from the graceful bronze cigar-stand on the mantle.

"I say, old boy, takes you right home, there by old Belmont's," one of the party suggested.

"I wonder whose hat 'll hang up in your place?" said another, leaning towards the honorable Charles Augustus.

"Gus is a clever fellow!" remarked his expectant brother-in-law, patronizingly.

"With a good look-out for the dimes," said No. 1.

"All right now, though! 179 is a blessed reality. Gus don't like *Chateaux en Espagne*."

"I say, Martin, will you hold your tongue?" growled Charles Augustus from the gothic bookcase, where he was consulting, not "Purdon's Digest," but a bound volume of the "Spirit." "What kind of feed does the governor give, Mort?"

"Can't say; this is his first spread. Silver all comes from Ball's—Addy saw it there." And so she had, by the merest accident in the world, and came with the wonderful news that it was the most superb set that she had ever laid eyes on.

Mrs. Cooper, with a true housekeeper's appreciation, looked contemptuously on the Sheffield coffee-urn, which already began to show marks of service. How she panted for the day to come that should place her at the head of this magnificent establishment. Miss Madeline had already commenced amusing her leisure moments in making out a party list, from which many of their present visitors were excluded. "What would do for Ninth Street never would answer for Fifth Avenue."

But this was a daily and hourly remark with Mrs. Cooper; so much so, that the servants began to boast of it to neighboring chamber-maids and waiters as a settled thing, until the removal of the Mark Coopers became an *on dit* with their respective masters and mistresses.

As "birds of the air" are never wanting to "tell the matter," it was not long in coming to Mr. Mortimer Cooper's ears; but that worthy gentleman apparently saw no harm in popular preoccupation of his establishment, for he only shrugged his shoulders in silence, and worked the faster to get it thoroughly complete in every detail.

Very complete it was! Mrs. Mark Cooper exclaimed at every step, when she was conducted through it on the eventful New Year's day, far exceeding her most boundless imaginings. They were invited at five, but took the liberty of coming an hour earlier, to inspect the house by daylight, as Uncle Mortimer evidently expected they would. He received them in the marble-paved hall in a most elaborate costume, in honor of the occasion, his shirt frill half an inch wider than usual, Addy declared to her brother; but then its old-fashioned diamond brooch was of almost priceless value.

Mr. Cooper had exercised a fine taste, cramped by no narrow expenditure. They confessed to themselves, as they passed from room to room of the magnificent suite, they could not have improved anything if they had been consulted. The second floor was also fitted up in suites, one so plainly intended for Addy that she could hardly help thanking their generous relative on the spot—this time seriously—for his attention to her tastes and pursuits. There was the morning-room, a perfect gem of a boudoir, hung with ruby damask, bordered by blue and gold—pictures, cabinets, a piano-forte, though there was a magnificent instrument that she longed to run her hands over in the drawing-room; the dressing-room opening from it, with wardrobes that looked like one massive mirror, set in a delicately carved rosewood frame; the bed-chamber separated only by a curtain of lace and rose-colored silk. The very best drawing-room in Ninth Street, even in its best days, would not compare to that chamber.

"And how is this for a gay young bachelor?' said Mr. Cooper, opening the door of the adjoining suite.

Mortimer, Jr., was in ecstasies; nothing but a warning look from his mother prevented a volley of thanks; but he pulled up his collar, and examined his hair from right to left, before the superb dressing-glass, with visible satisfaction.

"We old people must be content to take a higher flight," Mr. Cooper remarked, as they reached the second staircase.

It was now Mrs. Mark's turn to bridle and look conscious. Wasn't it as good as saying, "All this belongs to you and your children?" and she felt a fresh curiosity to inspect her own apartments. But, just as they set foot on the stairs, a loud peal announced other guests, and they hastened to the drawing-room to receive them.

Mrs. Mark did the honors quite naturally and Addy found time to whisper to Miss Belmont, "You should see my rooms; they are superb!" before they were summoned to the dining-room.

Here also was a blaze of light and splendor. Mr. Cooper had attested his title as millionnaire in the rich appointments. Mrs. Mark was unconsciously tending towards her seat as mistress

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of the mansion, when she noticed plates were laid for eight, yet only six were present.

"Ah," said Mr. Cooper, as if understanding the involuntary pause, "one moment." And the "family party" had scarcely time to look at each other before he returned with a young lady in deep mourning upon his arm, and followed by a gentleman, whose calm self-possession was in strong contrast to the panic of the rest.

"Allow me to introduce my daughter, Miss Emily Cooper—my son, Mortimer Cooper, Jr.—just returned from their travels. My dear Mrs. Mark, your niece; she will take her place at the head of my table, if you will permit her. Mortimer, shake hands; your cousin, my namesake. Only a family party, my dears. Miss Belmont and Mr. Livingston will provide so well for your cousins, that they will not miss any little diversion your appearance may make from their share of Uncle *Noah's* property."

It was quite a long speech for Mr. Cooper, who rubbed his hands at the conclusion after the true stage-papa fashion, and the tableau would have done no discredit to the foot-lights of the Broadway or Wallack's. Though it certainly was not acting; for, however artificial most of the party might be in ordinary, their surprise and consternation on this occasion were genuine.

"Perhaps you don't exactly understand it, Mrs. Mark. These are poor Emily's children; a better wife never man had, or better children than she 's made these. Family interference isn't much use, after all, is it?"

It was well that the soup made its appearance at this critical period, for all the party were too well-bred to continue a scene before servants. The young gentlemen bowed to each other with the most studied politeness, and Madeline could not help acknowledging to herself that her new cousin was remarkably pretty, in spite of her close mourning, and perfectly lady-like. The ordeal of doing the honors at such a table sufficiently proved the last, however low her birth might be. Mrs. Mark found no refuge from her chagrin there, or in watching her nephew in contrast to her own son, who certainly lost by the comparison.

As for Miss Belmont and Mr. Livingston, their sole refuge from the *contretemps* of *such* a family dinner was in exchanging meaning glances by stealth at the utter confusion of the Mark Coopers, and took leave as soon as possible after they rose from the table.

"A charming little explanation going on there," said Charles Augustus, pointing over his shoulder to the drawing-room. "Sly old chap that! Quite romantic, 'pon my honor."

"I never was so thunderstruck," returned Miss Belmont, passing one slippered foot on the lower step of her father's house. "Do come in and talk it over."

Mr. Livingston was not slow in responding to such a cordial invitation. Whether it occurred to him on the spot to profit by his friend's mishap, we cannot well say; but, by the end of the season, Charles Augustus visited the Belmonts without invitation, and was made perfectly at home by his *fiancée*.

Mrs. Mark Cooper understood the facts of the case much better than her children, when the explanation was made; though how her brother-in-law had managed to conceal his marriage with the pretty dressmaker, Emily Talbut, from any member of the family was an ingenuity beyond her conception. The outwardly odd and crusty bachelor, Mortimer Cooper, was in reality the most exemplary of husbands in his modest home, and his children, though highly educated, never knew that they had claims to any other.

He loved them; but he had a share of the family pride of birth, which had made him look upon his brother's children as his ostensible heirs. He knew there would be quite enough to provide handsomely for his own family into the bargain. But their mother's death had made him, for the first time, feel what had been due to her, and what were her children's rightful claims; and, while he hesitated between this and custom, and the world's opinion, the memorable evening of the ball decided him.

Mr. Mortimer Cooper was very slow in believing the reality of his niece's repentance, and the warm attachment she manifested for her cousin Emily; but he forgave her after a time, so much so as to consent to receive her for a daughter-in-law. The family party was once more reunited, and, though her son was never entirely reconciled at losing the second story apartments, Mrs. Mark had the satisfaction in time of issuing her "AT HOMES" from 197 Fifth Avenue.

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ORIGIN OF NEW YEAR'S GIFTS.
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Aug 1854; 49, American Periodicals
pg. 130

ORIGIN OF NEW YEAR'S GIFTS.

THE ancients made presents out of respect on the New Year's Day, as a happy augury for the ensuing year, which were called *Strenæ*. Symmachus adds that the use of them was first introduced by King Tatius, Romulus's collegue, who received branches of vervain, gathered in the sacred grove of the goddess Strenua, as a happy presage.

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PANTLEBRIDGE'S FIRST LOVE.
Hickling, Frank H
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Nov 1854; American Periodicals
pg. 414

PANTLEBRIDGE'S FIRST LOVE.

BY FRANK H. HICKLING.

"Qui que tu soit voici ton maître;
Il est il fut, ou il doit être."

Whirr-rr, whirr-rr, whirr-rr, whirr-rr! The engine seemed performing an elephantine heel and toe step away somewhere in the recesses of the boat.

With one hand holding on to my hat, the other in my pocket, I sat on the promenade deck of "The Wanderer;" and as my legs, thrust between the rails at the edge, dangled over the water, I smoked and admired the passing panorama in silence. One cluster of white houses after another appeared from among the trees, to be again hidden by them as the boat "opened" the various points and bays that line the shores of the beautiful stream we were on.

The inevitable steamboat baby had at last cried itself to sleep. The man who reads shilling novels was at a "crisis" in the precise centre of the brown-paper covered inclosure. The two pretty girls who had chatted so gayly during the early part of our voyage now had their bright eyes shrouded with green veils, and occasionally their heads inclined ceremoniously and gracefully towards each other. Conversation had suffered a natural demise.

We were gliding over the fine expanse of water known as the Tappan Zee, or Bars, and I was trying to imagine an ancient Dutch crew in their picturesque costumes, gravely preparing to take in sail ere they attempted the perilous transit (as related in the veracious history of "Diedrich Knickerbocker"), when I was shaken out of my reverie by a loud "*Here* he is now!" and a pair of hands belonging to the owner of the voice were placed one on each of my shoulders. "*How* are you? How *are* you, old boy?" (Alas, reader, I *am* an old boy, and in the *French* sense of the term, too.) And my friend, Pantlebridge, as I responded to his salutation, inserted *his* legs also through the rails, and took a seat at my side.

I had not seen him for several years, and, while he lighted his cigar, I had more opportunity to observe him. He was stouter than he used to be. His complexion, partly hidden by heavy black "leg of mutton" whiskers, had become a tanned brown, and I felt a tremor as I noticed one or two white hairs just under the jaw bone. But his voice was as hearty, and his laugh as cheerful as ever. Entering into conversation, he told me that he had been surveying down in Texas; and, business having relaxed, he had taken the opportunity to come North and arrange some affairs requiring his presence—relative, as I presumed, to a small property that I knew had lately been left to him. As old acquaintances are apt to, on meeting after a long interval of absence, we talked over every one we had known in former times. *This* one had died; *that* had married; a third had departed for the modern El Dorado to mend his broken fortunes. We again laughed at the schoolboy pranks we had played together; the capital jokes of setting the clock forward, and putting snuff in the pepper-box, for which we suffered a joint martyrdom next day; and gradually the conversation changed to the river we were on, and the alterations that time had made in the towns on its banks.

We were passing a neat little place, whose roofs shone at intervals through the deep green of the summer foliage. The church spire gleamed brightly in the sunlight, and the number of pleasure boats moored to the beach indicated that the village was not a commercial one.

As we came abreast, Pantlebridge ceased speaking, and, taking a little spyglass from his pocket, closed one eye, and gazed long and fixedly at the shore; so long, that I at length inquired "If he saw anything remarkable in the place?" I had to repeat my question before it was answered. Shutting the glass with a sigh, he replied—

"Ah, Jack! there's a great many painful memories connected with *that* place, by George!"

"Indeed!" said I, sympathetically. "I never should have imagined anything of the sort, to look at you."

"Ah, my dear boy," continued my friend, "'You may break the vase, but the smell of the flowers will hang round it still,' as that fellow, 'Gray,' says."

Pantlebridge is very fond of poetry, but he does not always get his quotations correctly; so I mildly suggested that it struck me "Moore" had written something of the kind.

"Very possibly! very possibly!" he replied. "So that I get the sentiment straight, I don't care *who* wrote it."

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I agreed with him that *that* was the main point, and I added a few hints as to a desire to hear what had occurred that it left such an impression on him. He seemed gratified at my curiosity, and, proposing to change our seats to where "the old lady in the green bonnet couldn't overhear us," he lighted a fresh cigar, and proceeded to narrate what he termed one of his heart histories.

"Jack," he prologued, "you are younger than I am" (I am his junior by two years), "and it may probably be of use to you. My dear boy, let me beg of you always to keep clear of the girls. One-half of the trouble we experience in this world is owing to *them* and money matters. Enchantresses that they are, they raise storms on the sea of life that cause many a gallant bark to reel and go down, or, escaping a shattered and dismasted hull, drive full split on the sands of misanthropy and cynicism. Beware of their bright eyes and dimpled smiles. Beware of their clustering curls and—and—coquetish bonnets. For, my dear Jack, 'the trail of the serpent is over them all.'"

Pantlebridge appeared visibly affected; he puffed away at his cigar in silence for some time, at the close of this adjuration. Presently, he resumed—

"It's a strange coincidence, but it was just such a day as this, and on a boat like this, that I first saw her."

"Saw *her!* Saw whom?" I interrupted. "You haven't told me her name yet."

"Haven't I? True, so I haven't. America Ann Battledore. Confound her! Pretty name, ain't it?" continued Pantlebridge, in a subdued voice.

"Yes; particularly the last one," I answered, smiling.

"Don't laugh, Jack," said he, mournfully. "Don't laugh! Sir, it was a day like this, on this very river. Just such a clear, transparent atmosphere, that, on looking towards the horizon, made you think you could see into futurity."

"Into *what?* I don't clearly understand that last."

"Never mind; don't interrupt me. If everybody understood all they heard, the age would be far ahead of where it is. I was sitting on the lower deck, watching a couple of children eating molasses-candy, when a lady and gentleman issued from the saloon to taste the fresh air. The lady was one of those glorious beings that float at rare intervals across our path, to show us there is yet something worth living for. Melting dark eyes, fringed with raven lashes; a delicately rounded figure, robed in a green travelling-dress; a—and, in fact, it 's no use trying to describe her, it 's an utter impossibility. Just imagine three of the most beautiful creatures that you ever saw, and multiply by six, and you will have a faint idea of her attractions. Her companion was very portly, and not very tall; a very remarkable face, though—heavy eyebrows, large aquiline red nose. Quite the Roman senator, I assure you. Had three gold seals at his watch-fob. Lord! I remember it as if it was yesterday.

"When the lady appeared, I think I must have stared at her for fifteen minutes, at least, before I recovered my senses. I was so struck that I recollect I ran down stairs into the cabin to conceal my emotion, and did not know anything until I found myself at the bar. Here I took a little something to steady my spirits, and, by means of a gratuity to the steward, ascertained the name of my adored. Her father was Jabez Battledore, Esq. Had retired from the pork and ham business. You smile, Jack," said Pantlebridge, here turning to me with a severe air. "It was wholesale, sir; wholesale, I give you my honor."

I made the *amende* by stating that I did not for an instant *dream* that it was retail, and begged him to proceed. He resumed in a mollified tone—

"Had retired from the *wholesale* pork and ham business, and was enjoying the '*otium cum dignitate*' at his villa, in the little village we have just passed.

"When I came on deck again, I found old Mr. Battledore had perched himself on the guards near the bow of the boat, and was inspecting a newspaper. The charming America, deeply engaged over a book, was seated on a bench at the other side. I took a stool, placed it close by her, and sat down leaning against a post that supported the upper deck. I imagined a thousand ways of making her acquaintance. I even slyly tipped her parasol off the bench with a little stick, and then picked it up and handed it to her with a profound bow.

"But she only said, 'Thank you!' and went on reading. So I sat down again, and, tilting my stool on its hind legs *à l'Americaine*, leaned against my post and continued to admire her until I fell into a reverie.

"I never *could* tell how long I continued lost in thought; it was some time though; and I was only aroused from it by the boat giving a violent jar. Something fell heavily against me, upsetting *me* and the stool, and causing my head to strike a trunk with such violence that I saw a miniature eruption of Mount Vesuvius. I

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opened my eyes—I had shut them in order to *think* better—and, to my great astonishment, found the object of my admiration sitting in my lap, and screaming at the top of her voice.

"Now, I had been imagining some absurd thing or other, about her offering me her hand, and I cruelly refusing it; and my first confused impression was that she had gone into violent hysterics in consequence of my barbarous treatment. A second glance undeceived me. The boat, as it afterwards appeared, had struck against the wreck of a sloop sunken in the stream, and the concussion had thrown my fair friend against me in the manner I have described.

"Presuming that we were about to fill up and go down, I put one arm around Miss Battledore, determined to save *her* at all hazards. But it very soon appeared that it was not on her own account that she was screaming, but for Mr. B., who had been sent flying off the guards while busy over his newspaper. All this did not take a minute to pass. At the first intimation of the aquatic excursion of her father, I rushed to the side and began to unbutton my vest, trying to screw up my courage to jump in and save him for his daughter's sake."

Pantlebridge paused here, and knocked the ashes from his cigar.

"Jack," continued he, thoughtfully, "it *is* astonishing what clever people one sometimes meets with on a journey. Now, no sooner did I begin to unbutton my vest than a dozen hands were stretched out to assist me in disrobing, and, before I knew where I was, my coat and vest had been torn off by a gentleman with a hook nose, and with such energy as almost to wrench my arms out of their sockets. I was also nearly strangled by two more of my assistants, who, taking opposite ends of my cravat, pulled different ways.

"While this was passing, Mr. Battledore had drifted with the tide to nearly opposite me, when he came slowly up to the top of the water. He looked as much like a buoy as anything I know of, and on reaching the surface, he commenced a series of evolutions such as I have seldom seen equalled. First on his back, then on his face, he flung his arms about as though they did not belong to him, and terminated the performance by going down a second time. As fancy swimming, it was very beautiful; but there was not much utility in it.

"I gave a second glance in the direction of America, to confirm me in my resolution, but did not see her, as she had fainted and been carried into the saloon; and, assisted by my hook-nosed friend, who gave me a tremendous shove in the small of the back, I jumped overboard just as Mr. B. was coming up for the third time. You know I never was a great proficient in swimming; I therefore thought that I would approach him cautiously. However, he saved me all further trouble of deliberating how *I* should take *him*, by catching tightly hold of *me* by the left leg. Heavens! I think I can feel him yet."

"Do you swim?" added P., interrupting himself suddenly.

I replied modestly, that I sometimes did a little at it.

"Well, then," continued he, "just imagine yourself swimming with a Paixhan gun strapped to one leg, and you have an idea of how I felt. I *implored* him to let go; I adjured him *solemnly*, on my *honor*, that I would save him at all risks; but he made no reply. To be sure though, he couldn't, for his head was under water. In spite of the most desperate efforts, I felt myself being drawn down. I think, even as it was, I might have sustained myself a little longer, possibly until the boat, that was fast approaching, should reach us; but just at this juncture, as we drifted by the stern of the steamer, the hook-nosed gentleman, in his zeal, flung a stool at me, which, striking me on the head, settled the matter at once.

"Partially stunned, I became fairly delirious. I tried to kick the old gentleman; I swore like a trooper. I remember that the insane idea that a shark, whose mouth was filled with cross-cut saws, was trying to bite my leg off, floated across my brain. I was just conscious of grappling frantically with old B., getting my fingers in his mouth and extracting a double set of artificial teeth, and all was over.

"Jack, it is a dreadful sensation—that of drowning—particularly with an old gentleman hanging to one leg."

"They told me that, when I was hauled out, I had the teeth still tightly clenched in my hand. I believe one of the boat's crew caught me by the hair as I went under, and fished me up with Battledore still hanging on to my leg; at least, so they told me afterwards. *I* didn't know anything about it. They carried us into the cabin and administered blankets and brandy with various other remedies. I came to sooner than my companion in misfortune, I suppose because he had taken so much water that it required more brandy to make a proper mixture. The first thing that I was conscious of was finding the pipe of a bellows between my teeth, and my hook-nosed acquaintance performing on the valves. He immediately informed me that he

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had my coat and vest safe, and I found, when I thanked him afterwards for his exertions, that he was a Hebrew from Chatham Street, which probably accounted for his interest in the articles.

"In the course of an hour, we were both sufficiently recovered to come on deck; and I assure you, sir, I was in a state of self-satisfaction—that is, after I had got my dry clothes on, you understand—not easily imagined. I had saved the life of a fellow-creature. You never saved the life of a fellow-creature, did you?"

"Never, unfortunately."

"Well, I *do* assure you, you can have no conception of one's sensations. To feel that you have rescued a fellow-creature from a violent death, and *such* a death, too! and that fellow-creature the father of an America Ann Battledore! Pooh! *my* dear sir, I felt like old Battledore and myself knocked into one, I can tell you. And then the way that America thanked me! Why, to be thanked that way by such an angelic being, I would not only have pulled the old gentleman out, but I'd have shoved him overboard again, if necessary. Oh! I don't know when I have felt so happy before or since."

Pantlebridge heaved a deep sigh and appeared lost in a cloud of tender recollections, and for some time he watched the light wreaths of cigar smoke, as they floated, in silence. Presently he resumed—

"You may imagine that Mr. Battledore was delighted with me. He made me tell him over and over again how I had saved him. He looked upon me as a second Leander, and you may suppose that I was only too happy to give him and his daughter a glowing description of my exertions in his behalf. I thought it best, however, to say nothing about my operation in dentistry. In the course of conversation, he soon ascertained that I held a respectable position in society; and when he found that I was only making a summer excursion for pleasure, he insisted on my spending some time with him at 'The Bower in the Bushes,' as he had christened his place. His daughter joined her entreaties, and, after modestly declining once or twice, I suffered myself to be persuaded.

"We had a delightful time until the boat landed us at ——, which, you know, is a town of moderate size nearly opposite to Northport. Here we found a boat, belonging to Mr. B., to take us across the river. I will mention to you here that it was rather peculiar in its construction, having a paddle-wheel at each side, which wheels were turned by a crank in the centre. This movement, which is frequently met with now on small boats for pleasure, was at that time quite a rarity. There was also a little cabin at the afterpart, made by the sides being carried up and roofed over, with a door serving as a protection against bad weather. It was used for excursions on the river, and also to convey any of the family across when they desired to take the steamer for New York, which stopped at ——.

"The propelling power was a stout negro boy, who rejoiced in the grandiloquent name of Columbus. Cole, I think, was his family name; but he might as well have had none, as it was never used. This Columbus acted as engineer, gardener, footman, and driver, as we Americans call the coachman—was general factotum, in short, to the establishment. He was quite musical, and constantly performed selections from camp-meeting airs, in a nasal tone. Sometimes, when the tune went higher than his voice, he followed it up in a squeaking falsetto; thus, like Alboni, singing in the registers. I was often deeply interested when Columbus became involved in the difficulties of an air, and sympathized with him in his ultimate triumph by the aforesaid falsetto. I think I could sustain a respectable part at a camp-meeting now, with just what I learned from that darkie.

"When we came to the other side, we found Mr. B.'s carriage waiting for us. It was a neat little two-horse affair. I handed the lady in, and, as her father sat on the front seat with Columbus, I assumed the vacant place alongside of her. I was supremely happy. Believe me, Jack, there are few greater pleasures in life than that of sitting alongside of a charming girl, in a neat little carriage that carries you over the ground like a whirlwind. I thought so then, at all events. She pointed out to me all the lions of the place: Mr. Trimmin's dry-goods store, where were retailed gloves, laces, scandal, and other ladies' wares; the circulating library, indispensable in such a place; and, lastly, she extended a delicate forefinger in line with the roof of a cottage that appeared among the trees, and informed me that it was the 'Bower in the Bushes.'

"It stands some distance from the village. In summer it is buried in honeysuckles and roses, and surrounded with trees, or was then, which made it so retired that you would not think there was another house for miles around. A deep and long porch—that *sine quâ non* to a country-house, and which, to me, always seems to speak of pleasant chats, readings, and last, but not least, delightful flirtations—faced a smooth lawn, only broken by rose-trees and

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cedars. It was here that we were welcomed by America's elder sister, Lucretia, who made up the number of the family, their mother having been dead some years. I may also mention a couple of female domestics whom Columbus was eternally quarrelling with, and from whom he sought refuge in the stable, I believe, when worsted in any of the various 'jousts at outrance' that were daily occurring.

"The circle of gentlemen acquaintance that visited the 'Bower in the Bushes' was drawn from the various villages surrounding Northport. One of these, a young lawyer named Diagram, was quite intimate. He used to come over on horseback in the afternoon, and stay to supper very often. He was a slender, quiet-looking individual. I never, from the first, saw anything to admire about him. He was very fond of the ladies' society, but had not much to say to me. I set him down as a very average young man; if anything, rather *below* mediocrity than above it; and I suspected immediately, on his second or third visit, that Lucretia was the magnet that drew him over there on horseback so often, particularly because I had surprised them whispering together once or twice, in a very confidential manner. I never appeared to notice anything of the kind. I imagined, though, that he'd have some trouble in getting over papa, for I was very sure that Mr. Battledore did not fancy him much—not as much as he did me, at all events.

"The old gentleman testified his regard for me by detaining me in the dining-room of an afternoon, talking or playing checkers—a game that he was very fond of. He did this more often, probably, because, like a good courtier, I let him win after a sharp contest. I must confess this favor shown me was attended with its inconveniences. Frequently, while my opponent was hard at work double-cornering my last king—we generally swept the board—I could hear, through the open window, Diagram's voice mingled with the softer tones of the sisters, as they carried on a most animated conversation under the long porch that fronted the lawn. At such times, I was reminded of being 'kept in' for missing my lessons in schooldays.

"Often have I sat by that window, the summer air moving the light tendrils that hung across the sash, and fanning my cheek—now and then the hum of some great bee sounding angrily as he whizzed past—all my attention strained to catch what they *could* be saying to make them laugh so, out on the porch; while old Mr. B.—with knitted brow and pursed-up mouth, his whole soul absorbed in the game, moving, as it seemed to me, at the rate of once every quarter of an hour, the very picture of cautiousness—obstinately refused to take the man that, without letting my intention appear, I was doing my best to sacrifice. And then, at last, when the victory was gained, chuckling triumphantly, with an 'Aha, Pantlebridge, my boy, I've got you now! I've got you now! You fought hard, but I out-generalled you!' And then he would commence explaining to me how it was that I missed it.

"I consoled myself with the idea that I was making great headway, at head-quarters at all events, and, when released, I would *fly* out of the dining-room on to the porch. You smile, Jack, at the idea of *my* flying, and I know that Time has made my vest wider at the waist than the shoulders; but it was not so then, and when I had on my green coatee, with gilt buttons, I was, to speak modestly, not such a bad-looking fellow. I wore a green coatee in order to look like Count D'Orsay. I used to be thought to resemble him somewhat, at least so I have been told; and I had seen a print of him as he appeared at the Derby. He had on a green coatee, with gilt buttons; so I had one made to resemble it."

As he finished this explanation, Pantlebridge, looking a little conscious, settled his collar, hemmed, and continued—

"Well, when I came to the porch, I usually found Diagram seated between the two ladies. I soon saw his game. Before Mr. B. or myself, he divided his attentions, so as not to raise suspicion. Nay, one afternoon he flirted so desperately with America, that I really became jealous. It was on the porch, and having my penknife open in my hand at the time, I had liked to whittle one of the chairs to pieces.

"Every time he said anything more than usually tender, I cut a notch into the chair, wishing it was his throat, and I became as sulky as a young bear. But America perceived it, and running over to me, she asked me to ride with them that afternoon, and, in spite of the dire resolution I had been mentally vowing a minute before, all my ill-humor vanished. There was no resisting that girl. She always said twice as much with her eyes as she did with her tongue, and, when placing a little white hand on each arm of the chair, and leaning forward, with her eyes looking so pleadingly into mine, she coaxed—

"'Ah! pray do join our party, Mr. Pantlebridge. I always feel so *safe* when you are along.' I jumped up and went right off to get ready. All the way up stairs I hung my head

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to one side, and with my eyes turned up like a 'duck in a thunder-storm,' I kept murmuring: 'Ah! pray *do* come with us. I really *sha'n't* feel safe unless *you* are along!' Turning the landing, I came suddenly on old Battledore, who, with a face of anxiety, hastily asked—'Why! what has happened? *Where* am I to go to?'

"I reddened to my ears as I stammered something about repeating some lines of poetry, and I heard the old man chuckling all the way down stairs.

"I thought, that afternoon, that, if Diagram had made *me* feel jealous on the porch, I must have repaid *him*, with interest, during the ride. I was rather a good rider, and he was not. He did not like going very fast, and both Lucretia and I did; and, as very often happened on our equestrian excursions, Lucretia would leave him, and cantering up to me, say, 'Come, Mr. Pantlebridge, let us leave these slow ones behind.' And, at this challenge, excusing myself to my companion for leaving her in charge of Diagram, we would gallop forward at the first turn of the road, leaving the two out of sight.

"I thought I detected a bitter smile on Diagram's face once or twice, and I rather liked the fun. 'Come, old fellow,' I said to myself, 'let's see how you like this sort of thing; and accordingly I showed no great hurry to rejoin them. It seemed to me that Lucretia did not either. At first, I said to myself, 'Oho! it appears that she has some small infidelities to revenge also.' Then I began to imagine that it was the natural coquetry inherent in woman—I beg pardon, I *mean some* women—and which is only put an end to by the last carriage that ever stops for them. At last, however, I began to settle down into the conviction that my own good looks had something to do with it; and with this I murmured to myself, in alarm—'Merciful Fathers, if *both* of these girls should happen to be in love with me!' I thrust the idea away as an absurdity; still it returned again and again, with such a complacent smirk, that I gradually found myself looking slyly around at it, with an 'I wonder if it is so?'

"Lucretia found a thousand things for me too, as we rode along. 'Oh, Mr. Pantlebridge, *do* let us turn up that little green lane; it looks so romantic when the sunlight breaks through the leaves.' She was *so* curious to know '*where* it could possibly go to.' The saddle wanted tightening, and I had to lift her off and on. Then she *knew* the check-rein wasn't right, because Daisy fretted so. And now, '*Would* I get her that spray of blackberries up that high bank?' I muddied my neatly blacked boots, and tore my coat with the brambles, and, in getting the blackberries, my foot slipped, and I slid down a clay bank into a ditch at the roadside. As I did so, a loud 'Haw! haw! haw!' sounded high above my head. '*What* are you laughing at?' said I, savagely, looking up, for I perceived that Lucretia had a difficulty in restraining her smiles, also. It was only a crow, however, whom the rattle of my fall had scared off a branch above me, and whose cawing, heard imperfectly—I was a citizen, Jack—I had taken for laughter at my misfortune.

"We saw nothing more of America and her escort until we got home, whither they had arrived before us. They were seated on the porch, and I fancied that Diagram looked rather vexed, and America seemed discomposed also. I took no notice of it, and laughed and rattled away with a forty conversation power; and, after supper, when America sang for us, I was all attention, while Diagram walked up and down with his hands in his coat-tail pockets, and his mouth contracted into an inarticulate whistle. I pitied him, and even Lucretia took compassion on him, and asked him to 'come, sit down,' pointing to a chair near us; but he wouldn't, and shortly after took his leave.

"I felt amused at what I considered his silly jealousy.

"'Didn't we,' said I to myself—'didn't we make a fair *swap*, as the Yankees say? I didn't hinder you saying what you pleased to America, and you can't be angry at Lucretia saying what she pleased to me.' Thus I mentally addressed him as he paraded the parlor; but, as he couldn't know it, he went away as cross as ever.

"I had not been a week at the 'Bower in the Bushes,' before I was struck with the peculiar operations of Columbus in his *rôle* of gardener.

"My window commanded a view of that particular part of the garden he was busy upon; and I was considerably puzzled at seeing him, after carefully hoeing various hills or rows, commence to mix one with wood-ashes, another with lime, and so on through a variety of compounds. When I first noticed this, I sat down in front of the window with my elbows on the ledge and my chin on my hands, and speculated for some time on his apparently eccentric system of gardening. Columbus himself appeared to entertain a most unmitigated disgust of the whole affair, judging from the peculiar negro chuckle of contempt that he indulged in.

"And here, by parenthesis, I may remark that *that* boy always reminded me of the Irishman who applied for a situation in a gentle-

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man's house, where he could do anything 'except work and run errands.' Such a place, I think, would have suited Columbus to a nicety. When not overlooked during his agricultural hours, he spent a great part of them in taking rests *ad lib.*, as the musicians phrase it. On these occasions, he crossed his hands on the end of the hoe-handle, and placed his under jaw on them. Sometimes, while in this attitude, he closed his eyes, and remained asleep to all intents and purposes, basking in the perpendicular rays of a meridian sun. As the eyes lazily opened at the termination of one of these periods of repose, I was reminded of the same process in the water turtles as they are often seen on a log in the sun.

"I ascertained that this style of gardening was a hobby of Mr. Battledore's, and one that he was riding pretty hard. It was a course of experiments for the prevention or cure of the potatoe blight, and all his agricultural chemistry was brought into action in the cause. I thought Columbus's impression of the matter was a pretty good one.

"'What is Mr. Battledore going to do with all that wood-ashes and lime, Columbus?' I inquired of him, one day.

"'Him 's a tryin' to fine out how to rot de taters, sah,' he replied, raising himself on the hoe handle.

"One day, Mr. Battledore explained his ideas on the subject for my especial gratification. Standing astride, like a Colossus, and gracefully waving his hands, or joining them at the tips of his fingers, he addressed me somewhat in this style:—

"'My dear Pantlebridge, there is a possibility that at some future day the name of Battledore may descend to posterity coupled with the proud title of benefactor of the human race. Already our County Agricultural and Philosophical Societies have recognized my exertions in this cause by conferring on me an honorary membership. My grand theory is based upon the system of Nature, and upon the system of Nature alone. Do we not know that in those countries where the most venomous serpents are found, plants and roots also grow whose juices neutralize their poison? And can it be supposed that Nature is less bountiful in other regions? No, Pantlebridge; with the disease is given the remedy. And the cure for this dreadful blight, if we only knew it, is probably at this moment lying unheeded at our feet; and why should not I find it as well as another?'

"It seemed to me that a great defect in this plan was that Mr. Battledore never seemed to reflect that wood-ashes and lime, etc., however plentiful about Northport, was not so in probably the very regions where they would be most wanted; but I hastened to say that no doubt it would be a valuable discovery, and I trusted he would be successful.

"'Don't imagine,' continued he, interrupting me, 'that it is for a pecuniary reward I am toiling. No; it is for the benefit of the human race, and the approbation of the human race. What are you standing gaping at, Columbus? Why don't you go on with your work?'

"This parenthesis was addressed to the negro, who, with mouth and eyes wide open, as though he desired to imbibe the discourse *physically* and mentally, leaned on his hoe handle in his favorite position, and stared his master out of countenance. At this, however, he slapped the hoe vigorously into a heap, chopping a potato in two and spattering the dirt in all directions.

"'And the approbation of the human race,' continued Mr. Battledore, resuming his discourse, 'is all I desire; and this, Pantlebridge, is well worth striving for. I wish for no blood-stained wreath of laurel, no poetaster's crown of bays. No; all I want is the gratitude of my race for a *useful* discovery.' And at this conclusion, with his heart full, the benefactor of the human race strode towards the house.

"When he had gone, Columbus stopped work to ask, 'Wedder dat *race* what massa was to be de *bully factor* ob was a comin' off up heah or down on de Long Islan' course?' I told him I believed the place was not yet fixed, and left him forming a tripod with the hoe.

"Mr. Battledore was not content with experimenting on the potatoes; he was also seized with a desire of writing on his theories, and he accordingly commenced publishing his articles in the 'Flag of the Free,' the county newspaper, issued at the neighboring large town on our side of the river, which place he drove over to once a week; and as I didn't laugh when, after sounding me on the subject, he by degrees owned up the authorship of the papers in question, he began to take me into his confidence. And, on warm afternoons, while sitting on the piazza smoking, and during such times as the ladies indulged in their afternoon nap, he took great delight in reading them to me, and commenting on them as he went along.

"It might have been a collection of all the inscriptions on the milestones between there and New York, for all I remembered of the matter; for I was too often engaged in filling a vacant chair with a neatly turned figure and

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pair of bright eyes, to know much of what he was saying. But I must have said 'Yes, sir' and 'Exactly' in the proper places, as I never heard anything to the contrary. Some writer says 'A man is never good for much until he withdraws his attention from the fair sex, and lets them take care of themselves;' and, had old Mr. Battledore known my thoughts, he would have agreed with the aforesaid writer most heartily. As it was, I have no doubt he thought me a splendid listener.

"'The course of theories never did run smooth,' to paraphrase Shakspeare; and one afternoon, on receiving a copy of the tri-weekly 'Flag of the Free,' the theorist made his appearance on the porch in a state of mental fusion. The ladies were enjoying their siesta, and I was alone.

"'Would you believe it, Pantlebridge?' he cried. 'Would you believe it? Here's some stupid blockhead has undertaken to write *me down* in this paper. And he has the impertinence to allude to me, sir, in the character of "small potatoes," sir! *Small potatoes*, by Jove, sir, is what the villain does not hesitate to call me! And he advocates some *absurd idea* about planting *turnips* instead of potatoes, as if people *could* change their tastes and eat *turnips* instead of potatoes. The man's *a fool!* Look at it for yourself, Pantlebridge; here it is.' And he slapped the journal with the back of his hand and flung it at me.

"I picked up the paper and read the article, which was pretty severe on 'Potato Rot,' Mr. Battledore's *nom de plume*. The writer, as Mr. Battledore had stated, proposed planting turnips instead of potatoes, on the principle of a change of crops; and he quoted Cobbett's prophecy, 'that potatoes would ultimately be the ruin of Ireland,' and applied it generally to all places where potatoes were cultivated. The piece to me did not seem written altogether seriously, and it certainly was impertinent to call the old gentleman small potatoes.

"And, Jack, the more I have reflected over the matter *since*, I am convinced that the writer well deserved a horsewhipping for his personalities. At the time, I was rather inclined to laugh, and did not express myself as strongly on the subject as I have since reflected that I should have done. Be that as it may, however, my host asked my assistance in composing a rejoinder, and we sat up till two o'clock in the morning in his study writing one. I never was so sleepy in all my life. We consulted all possible agricultural authorities living and dead. I worked like a horse, or an *editor*. I remember I thought that a little poetry might give a turn or finish to it, and relieve the dryness of the subject, and I suggested

> '"Poor race of men," said the pitying spirit,
> "Dearly ye pay for your primal fall."'

But, as he seemed decidedly opposed to it, I yielded the point, as I considered he was much deeper in the subject than I. We were rather proud of our performance, and signed 'Potato Rot' at the end with a flourish.

"Next morning at breakfast, when America said, pityingly, 'Dear *me*, Mr. Pantlebridge, how pale you look! Ain't you well?' I blushed up to the eyes, although I returned a grateful glance, and replied that I never was better. Her father, the habitual red of whose complexion never varied, didn't raise his eyes from his toast.

"In due time, came the tri-weekly 'Flag of the Free,' and containing a broadside that was worse than before. Our antagonist seemed to enjoy the fun immensely.

"But Mr. Battledore set to work again, and made a last desperate effort; and when he had finished, it being the period of his weekly visit to the county town, he ordered Columbus to get ready the carriage and drive him over, intending to give his article to the editor in person, and (as he confided to me) ascertain, if possible, the name of his antagonist.

(Conclusion next month.)

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PANTLEBRIDGE'S FIRST LOVE.
Hickling, Frank H
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Dec 1854; 49, American Periodicals
pg. 504

PANTLEBRIDGE'S FIRST LOVE.

BY FRANK H. HICKLING.

(Concluded from page 421.)

"WHEN Mr. Battledore reached home again, it was supper-time. We were all out on the porch as usual, Diagram also, and making himself excessively agreeable to the ladies. I was also endeavoring to be as entertaining as I was able. I think I can see the glitter of the wheels in the sunlight yet, as the carriage whirled rapidly into the lane. When it stopped, old Mr. Battledore, without waiting for Columbus to open the door as usual, and which took that worthy some time to accomplish, thrust his arm out and opened it himself, and then came trotting up the steps with a face as red as the sun that was just setting. I thought something was in the wind, so I sat still where I was. Neglecting the usual salutations, he made up to where Diagram was sitting with his chair tilted against the wall; halting in front of him, he shouted—

"'So, sir! so, sir! It was you, sir—a—sir, that called me *small potatoes*, was it, sir? You that have been amusing yourself with abusing *me* in the columns of the "Flag." And you have the *audacity* to come to my house and sit on my porch while pursuing this assassin-like series of attacks!' Then, with a bitter and mock politeness, he retreated a pace, bowing profoundly as he continued: 'Sir, your *most humble servant!* Your *most* obedient! Is there anything else you would like? Shall I bring you pen and ink for another article?' Then turning on the steam again, he went on: 'I *marvel* at your impudence; and you it is that are going to *change the world! Upon my word!* And you are the author of that infamous turnip theory, filling a valuable newspaper with your trash on the subject. But I'll let you know, Mr.—a—a—Diagram, that no man shall insult *me* with impunity! A pretty thing, indeed, if men of my years and experience are to be the butts of every brainless boy that chooses to send an arrow at the mark!'

"And he waved his arm, reminding me strongly of 'Malek,' the old Moor in the 'Apostate.' I thought that afternoon, as I sat there, that the wholesale pork and ham business had spoiled an excellent tragic actor.

"While Mr. Battledore was relieving his mind at this rate, Diagram had remained perfectly stupefied leaning against the wall, with a face of blank dismay. Probably at first he thought Mr. Battledore had lost his wits; but, at the mention of turnips and potatoes, conscience no doubt recalled to him the articles on the potato rot, and he began to perceive what a dilemma he was in. Bringing his chair down on its fore-legs, he at this juncture stammered out—

"'But, my *dear* Mr. Battledore, I really hadn't, *on my honor*, the slightest idea. I do assure you'——

"Battledore, who had recovered his breath, here broke in again—

"'Don't dear *me!* I'm only "small potatoes," at your service, sir! And as to your not having the slightest idea, don't alarm yourself on that score, for I never thought you had.' Here he gave a withering smile. 'And this is *modern* politeness, to come to supper at one's house and plant a poisoned dagger in his back, while on terms of intimacy with his family. But why'—sinking to a moralizing tone—'why should I expect anything better? Who was ever yet thanked for what he did for the human race? Galileo was imprisoned, Columbus abused and ill-treated for all his services; and what could *I* expect better? Why don't you bring up that horse?' he shouted loudly to the negro, as he pointed to Diagram's animal, who was tied to the fence by the lane. And, so saying, he majestically strode into the house.

"The girls never troubled themselves much about their father's pursuits, and were therefore unacquainted with the turnip theory and its disastrous results; so that when Mr. Battledore left the porch, they turned with faces expressive of the greatest alarm to Diagram, who was still sitting looking at the door through which the old gentleman had passed, as if some dreadful apparition had vanished in that direction.

"'Oh, *Mr. Diagram*,' cried America Ann, 'what *have* you been doing or saying to make pa so angry? I declare, I never saw anything like it.'

"'You know,' chimed in Lucretia, 'that he thinks a *great* deal of Columbus, and, if he was impertinent, you ought to have complained to pa, and then this wouldn't have happened.'

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"The historical allusion of Mr. Battledore evidently had misled Lucretia as to the subject in dispute.

"'It *wasn't* the *nigger!*' said Diagram, completely bothered at this reproach from a friendly quarter. 'I never *did* or *said* anything to *him*. It's the infernal potatoes that have made all the mischief. I wish I had never *seen* one! He wrote something about them in the newspaper, and I was fool enough to answer his piece, for want of something better to do. How the mischief was *I* to know it was your father? He never signed his name as he ought to have done. Only "Potato Rot"—*Potato Rot*, that's all!' exclaimed Diagram, turning from the ladies to me and back again, as though addressing judges and jury. 'And how the deuce was I to know who Potato Rot was, I'd like to know?'

"'Oh, don't *swear* so, Mr. Diagram,' said Lucretia, quite shocked. 'Don't swear so; and, besides, pa might hear you, and think you were swearing at him. Oh, I am *so* sorry this has happened; I declare I don't know what's to be done now.'

"'*Pantlebridge*, are you and the girls coming in to your supper?' cried Mr. Battledore, at this instant, popping his head out of the dining-room window and back again, like the clown in the pantomime.

"'Yes, sir, in a moment,' chirruped the two ladies; and, as I passed in, I heard the rascal kiss the hand of one of them, then, hastily mounting his horse, he rode down the lane, without pausing

'To shake his mailed glove at the towers.'

"*Shakspeare*, eh, Jack?"

"Sounds like *Marmion*," said I.

"Well, may be you're right, I'm not quite sure. At all events, he rode off, and I can't say that I spent the evening in lamenting for what had occurred; for, though he always seemed friendly enough, still he was a good deal in the way when I wanted to talk to America, making trios of a good many intended duets.

"Of course, after this affair, his visits to the house ceased. He wrote a very apologetic sort of letter to Mr. Battledore, which the old gentleman put in the fire without answering. The ladies, being thus deprived of Mr. Diagram's agreeable society, made me their constant cavalier in their rides or walks, the last of which they took frequently in the direction of the village.

"I assisted them in choosing gloves and ribbons; and, indeed, in *all* matters of *importance* my taste was called in. Many a deep deliberation was held in the little store of Mrs. Trimmins, and I gained a great deal of valuable information during these '*séances*.' I found out that a dark red was *not* a dark red, but a *maroon*. And, in a little while, my mind became so educated that whereas at first, in describing a bonnet to my fair companion, I mentioned it as yellow, I now learned to speak of it as a salmon or a buff. They also intrusted me with the obtaining of books from the circulating library, while they waited at the store, as the library was at some distance from that place. At first they would say, 'Now, if you *can't* get "Murmurs of the Sea," or "The Distant Isles," bring us some periodical. But, on no account, fetch any histories or chemical works.' But, after a while, this changed to 'Mr. Pantlebridge, bring us something *nice; you* know what we like.'

"Upon two of these occasions the library was closed, Miss Snigglefritz, the presiding genius, having gone on a picnic, or something equivalent, as I gathered from a little *affiche*, written in delicate Italian hand, and wafered outside on the shutter. Sauntering back again to Mrs. Trimmins, I found a bay horse that I thought I recognized standing contemplating Mrs. Trimmins's 'hitching-post,' to which he was attached. And, on entering, no less a person than the lost Diagram rose to shake hands with me. He had happened to drop in, he said, to make some trifling purchases, and was delighted to see the ladies and *myself* again. I said *I* was delighted to see him, too; so he walked with us up to the precincts of Mr. Battledore's domain. Lucretia seemed pleased to see him, and I hardly thought it fair to spoil sport, particularly as I knew it did not require a breath from me to keep up the draught on the old gentleman's anger. For, when the girls attempted that evening to insinuate something in his favor, their papa gave them distinctly to understand that *his* opinion had not changed in the least, and, furthermore, expressed his conviction that Mr. Diagram was one of the most impertinent young men that he ever knew.

"This did not prevent them from speaking to Diagram, and walking with him whenever we met him in the village; and I thought that this began to be pretty often. He bought so much of Mrs. Trimmins that, had I been that good old lady, I should have become suspicious of an intention to set up a rival establishment.

"As for me, I was getting deeper and deeper in love with America with each succeeding walk or ride that we took together. I could think of nothing but her. One day I asked a country boy, at a fork of a road where I missed my way,

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'Can you tell me which way America Ann goes?' He looked at me for a few minutes with a grin, and said, 'A didn't see her.'

"I came to the conclusion one day, as I sauntered along with my gun on my shoulder, that this sort of thing would have to have a termination at the first favorable opportunity. 'What,' said I, 'Pantlebridge, are you, a great strong fellow like you, afraid of a girl? I'm *ashamed* of you!' As I said this to myself, I heard the beat of a horse's hoofs in a rapid gallop. Raising my eyes from the ground, where they had been resting in deep thought, I perceived Diagram on horseback come galloping out of our lane. As he passed me, I spoke to him; he barely returned my salutation with a nod, and, without checking his horse, continued at a pace that soon hid him from view. I was somewhat astonished. 'Since when,' thought I, 'has our talented friend Diagram taken to riding at that rate, and what is he doing in *our* lane?' As I turned from looking down the road after him, and resumed my walk towards the house, I perceived Columbus, who, having opened and shut the lane gate for Diagram's passage, was now practising the difficult feat of walking on his hands, in imitation of a circus troupe that had passed down the river a few days before.

"'Columbus,' I asked, 'what makes Mr. Diagram ride at that rate to-day?'

"'I spec he 's in a hurry to git home, sah,' replied Columbus, presenting the soles of his shoes for my inspection. He was not afraid of me, as I never either scolded him or informed on him.

"'Columbus,' said I, 'has he been at the house?'

"'Yes, sah,' replied the negro, from the level of the earth.

"I was astonished.

"'Did Mr. Battledore see him, do you know?' I inquired.

"'Yes, sah; and Mis' Diagram seen *him* too.'

"I was more and more puzzled. I looked at Columbus's heels that waved backward and forward like the stalks of some strange plant by the wayside; and then I drew a piece of money out of my pocket, and held it out between my fingers.

"'Columbus,' said I, 'do you know what he wanted?'

"The boy immediately substituted his head for his heels, and answered, as he took the silver—

"'Him had come to *p'pose*.'

"To propose! Here was a revelation.

"'Whom did he come to propose to?' I asked, anxiously.

"Columbus rattled the money in the hollow of his joined palms as he said—

"'To Mass' Battledore.'

"'To Master Battledore! What did he propose to Master Battledore for?' I demanded, a good deal bewildered.

"'Yes, sah; him p'pose to Mass' Battledore for Miss Lucreesher,' replied the boy, with a double shuffle movement of his heels.

"'What did Mr. Battledore say? And how do you know it was for Miss Lucretia?' I continued, feeling a good deal relieved of sundry clouds of suspicion that had been hovering on the edge of my horizon.

"'Tole him to *cl'ar out*, I spec; an' I know'd it was Miss Lucreesher, ca'se she come out arter him an' shuk hands wid him on de pic-azer when he lef', and 'quested him to keep up his sperits, or sumpin like dat, ca'se I held his hoss.' And Columbus favored me by whistling a bar of 'Jim Crow' as he waited for further questions.

"That was all he knew, however. He intimated that, happening by accident to be standing somewhere near a keyhole, the 'ole gempleman' had opened the door suddenly and threatened to whip him severely ('skin him,' Columbus phrased it), if he was found nearer to the house than the end of the lawn for the remainder of the afternoon.

"So I left Columbus's heels again to wave over his head undisturbed, and continued to the house, musing on what I had heard. The ladies had finished their supper when I got there, and were up stairs, where they remained during the rest of the evening, which I spent in playing checkers with Mr. Battledore. Two or three times he seemed on the point of confiding the visit to me, but probably thought better of it, for he checked himself without finishing his sentence.

"Things went on very much as usual after Diagram's proposal. To look at Lucretia, you wouldn't know she had ever been proposed to, or *for* rather, in the whole course of her life. I never was much of a hand in reading a lady's thoughts, and some ladies can conceal theirs so successfully that Mademoiselle le Normand herself couldn't find out anything. One thing was, I was very busy in examining my own affairs. They say 'one wedding makes many,' and proposals, I rather think, are apt to follow this rule. At least, I know that Diagram's venture did a great deal to turning my attention that way, and fixing my wandering resolutions.

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Some two or three days after his misadventure, one fine moonlight evening, I was out on the porch with my chair tilted against the wall. Lucretia, poor soul! complaining of a headache, had retired; America was detained by her father, reading to him or playing checkers, or in some equally interesting occupation.

"I sat, as I have stated, with my chair tilted against the wall under the piazza. I was in a melancholy frame of mind, and was listening to some one who was whistling, away down the road, the air of 'Daylight, love, has passed away.' It had quite an effect on me, for the whistler performed with considerable execution, running the air down with a flourish, and pausing artistically on the rest at the low C. It had rather a depressing effect on me, I say, for I was thinking to myself, 'Supposing she should come out *now*. *What* a chance!' I remembered that Mr. Battledore had that day stated his intention of driving to the county town next afternoon, and had offered me a seat along with him, so as to give me an opportunity of getting my gun-lock mended, and executing some other small commissions; and I said to myself, 'Another excellent chance to speak to him on the subject.' Then I pondered how to address the young lady. 'Miss America,' thus ran my ideas—'Miss America, you may probably consider it strange that, upon so short an acquaintance, I should presume to request your most serious attention to what I am going to say; but, as it is connected with a matter of vital importance to me, I may venture to do so.' Here I paused to run over the sentence two or three times, and fix it in my memory. I was rather pleased with the opening. 'You must have noticed that of late my attentions to you have been more particular than those which'——

"While I was busy eliminating this sentence, I heard steps in the passage, and Mr. Battledore, from the top of the stairs, address some one who was passing out by another door with, 'My dear, where are you going to?' 'Only for a little walk in the moonlight, pa,' was the reply, in a voice whose every tone I knew by heart."

"Pantlebridge," cried I, here interrupting him, "that last sentence is highly poetical. I don't flatter; it *is highly* poetical."

"*Do* you think so?" he replied, evidently gratified, and rubbing his hands. "*Do* you think so? Well, may be it is." And, as he continued, he repeated—

"Whose every tone I knew by heart.

"'Take Pantlebridge with you, my love,' rejoined the old man.

"I was delighted.

"'Oh, I'm not going far, pa,' answered the daughter; 'and it's a pity to trouble him. Besides, I believe he has gone to bed.'

"Maiden bashfulness, thought I, and I sprang up, upsetting the chair, and ran in to offer my services. With some hesitation, they were accepted; old Mr. Battledore saying that it was totally unsafe to walk without a gentleman, were it only on account of the dogs.

"I offered my arm, and we proceeded across the lawn through the rose-bushes and young cedars. It was one of those beautiful, cloudless, tranquil nights of the early summer. The moonlight lay over tree and flower and sward like a white frost. The shadows of the horse-chestnuts that skirted the lawn fell in deep and lengthened masses of shade. It was a night that I shall not soon forget.

"It is my opinion, Jack, that almost every one has some moonlight night in his memory that he recurs to with feelings of pain or pleasure, although he may not like to confess it.

"America moved lightly beside me; her little white hands were crossed over the arm that supported her light form against the unevenness of the ground. She seemed more beautiful than ever. When she looked up at me to reply to some question or remark, her regular features, blanched by the moonlight, were as faultless as the outline of a statue. I can't say that on the evening in question I was in the tranquil state of mind proper to enjoy a moonlight walk with a fair companion. On the contrary, I was in a cold shiver, and making desperate efforts to be composed all the time. I recollected a great many apposite maxims, such as 'Faint heart never won fair lady;' 'England expects every man to do his duty;' 'It's the early bird that catches the worm.' With these, and many other encouraging sayings, did I endeavor to keep up my spirits. Like Hogg's hero, I would have 'whistled up Lord Lennox's March to keep my courage cheery.'"

"Burns, Pantlebridge."

"*Ah!* yes, Burns. I was so busy reasoning with myself that I had very little to say to America; and she was very quiet also, and kept looking anxiously down the road.

"'What a heavenly night!' said I, and my voice seemed so harsh that I started at the sound.

"'Beautiful!' she replied.

"'Such a night as this the soul feels attuned to the harmonies of nature,' I continued, with a spasmodic swallow. 'Don't you think so?'

"'Yes, quite so,' said she, looking round at me with an astonished gaze.

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"We were approaching a cherry-tree that stood at the road-side and cast a circle of deep shade beneath it. I foresaw we would stop there. 'Now or never, old boy,' I said to myself. I gritted my teeth, and continued. I tried to remember the beautiful oration I had been preparing on the porch. I might just as well have tried to repeat the Constitution of the United States.

"'America!' said I, solemnly, with a gulp.

"'Sir!' she answered. Now, whether she had that 'female *presentiment*' usual on such occasions, and foreshadowing the coming question, or not, I can't say; but she looked desperately alarmed.

"'America, I have wished for an opportunity like the present to occur—for some time past. I—you—in fact, you behold before you the most miserable of human beings!' I was not exactly *before* her, for I was walking, of course, at one *side* of her; but I spoke figuratively, you understand. 'You behold before you the most miserable of human beings!'

"'Oh, gracious *me! don't* say so, Mr. Pantlebridge!' And she seemed just ready to cry.

"Seeing *her* so frightened, *I* began to recover my spirits, and I went on more boldly—

"'You cannot but have noticed that, for some time past, my attentions to you have been more particular than those that a gentleman usually pays a lady; and I do not think I have been mistaken in supposing that they were not disagreeable to you.' She held her head down, apparently watching the little slippers as they emerged from and disappeared under her dress with the most intense interest. 'May I not hope, then'——

"'A pleasant evening to you two!' at this instant exclaimed a voice from under the tree, and Diagram, whom, owing to the shadow, I had not before noticed, descended from the fence he had been sitting on, and advanced towards us. I believe America was really glad to be clear of me, she greeted Diagram with such fervor. *I* could have kicked him all the way to Northport with pleasure.

"'Dear me!' she cried, after a few minutes' conversation, 'I must have dropped my pocket-handkerchief. Do, Mr. Pantlebridge, see if you can find it anywhere along the road. It must be somewhere near here, for I had it in my hand just now.'

"I moved off with my hands in my pockets and my eyes upon the ground, and when I got a little way up the road, I found myself unconsciously whistling 'Sitting on a Rail.' I could not tell what to make of Diagram being found under the tree. 'What did he want? How did he come there?' I asked myself. Then I remembered the whistling that I had heard on the porch. 'It must have been he? What did he whistle for? Lucretia,' I answered myself; 'and Lucretia having a headache, and not being able to come, America went in her place.' I began to see through it. 'They *might* have made a confidant of me,' I thought, reproachfully, 'and yet they naturally thought that I might tell Mr. Battledore. Never mind,' I concluded, '*Mrs. Pantlebridge* sha'n't take any messages, whatever *America Ann Battledore* may do.' And, not having found the handkerchief up to this point, I changed 'Sitting on a Rail' to a quick step, and returned towards the chestnut-tree.

"I met the two advancing towards me, apparently in most earnest conversation. Diagram continued with us up to the end of the lane before he made his adieu. He related a very interesting murder trial, in which he had been retained as junior counsel, and of which I did not understand a single word. I found no further occasion that evening to acquaint America with my sentiments, as she hurried rapidly into the house, and retired almost immediately.

"After I got to my apartment, I sat down on the side of the bed to consider matters. 'Come,' said I, 'it's not so bad, after all. You were precious near it, and if it hadn't been for that Diagram—yes, *that Diagram* spoiled *all*. Better luck next time,' I added, as I laid my head on the pillow. 'The course of true love never did run smooth,' as all the world knows.

"Next morning at breakfast, America's eyes studiously avoided meeting mine. She seemed embarrassed. Good omen, I thought. 'She never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm i' the bud, prey on her damask cheek.'

"'Pantlebridge, a piece of beefsteak,' said old Mr. Battledore, as I repeated this to myself. 'You'll have to drive to-day, for Columbus has sprained his wrist so, he says, and wants to stay at home.'

"I gladly assented. 'We'll see,' thought I, 'if I don't make out better with papa than I did with the daughter.' At noon the horses were got *out*, and we got *in*. America seemed sorry to see us depart. She hung round the old man, and kissed him as he got into the carriage.

"'Why, you silly little puss,' said he, pinching her ear, 'did I never go to —— before, that you make such a fuss about it?'

"She held her hand out to me, with a 'good-by, Mr. Pantlebridge;' and, as I took the little fingers in my own, I thought I saw tears in her eyes. She remained standing, looking after the

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carriage until a turn of the road hid her from my view; and, as her slender form vanished, I turned again to my companion with a sigh.

"I deferred saying anything to Mr. Battledore on the matter I was interested in until we should be on our return, partly because he talked so much on other subjects that it left me no chance to introduce what I desired to say.

"I had my gun-spring repaired, and, Mr. Battledore getting through his affairs at ——, we started on our way home rather earlier than he usually returned. I felt elated, I did not know why. It was a fine afternoon, and the two bays made the light carriage spin over the level road. It was towards sundown, and our course was marked by a train of dust rolling away behind us, ruddy in the rays of the setting sun. I introduced my subject very neatly, as I flattered myself.

"'Sir,' said I, 'your daughter is indispensable to my happiness. My position is very fair, and I flatter myself I am not altogether disagreeable to her; and to be allied to you I should consider an event of my life.'

"I went on in this strain for some time. Mr. Battledore was visibly affected.

"'My dear boy,' said he, as I paused at last, 'nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have you for my son-in-law; but—but—*she's in love with that scoundrel Diagram!*'

"The reins and whip fell from my hands, and, had not my companion caught them, we should have gone home faster than we intended. I felt the blood rush violently to my face, and, for an instant, I was unable to speak; then I muttered between my set teeth, 'the deceitful, the heartless little coquette!' and I am afraid I added some pretty strong expressions. What a 'thrice sodden ass' had I made of myself! I felt as if I could shoot her, knock out Diagram's brains, and set fire to the house. I did not wish to see the place again. Old Mr. Battledore tried to comfort me.

"'Never mind, Pantlebridge,' he kept saying, 'it's not so bad after all. I told the rascal he should *never* have her; and now, that she don't see him, she'll forget him and learn to like you. You know it is 'out of sight, out of mind' with the women. You're a great deal better-looking fellow than he is any time;' and he kindly patted me on the shoulder. But I could not take that view of the subject.

"'She will *never* forget him!' I exclaimed, bitterly. 'She has a memory like the calculating boy, and as to her never seeing him, she meets him every day and evening, too, I believe,' I added, remembering the preceding night and the cherry-tree. What to do I did not know. I wished to take the boat for New York that would be going down the river in an hour or so. I could not bear the idea of seeing the treacherous girl again.

"As I revolved these things in my mind, we were rolling rapidly up the street of Northport. As we approached the store of Mrs. Trimmins, I recognized the old lady as she held on to the post front of her door with one hand, while the other signalled us to stop, waving something white, like a shipwrecked mariner attracting the attention of a distant vessel.

"'I thought,' said she, as I checked the horses, 'I thought it was you, sir; and I says to myself, law, says I, here comes Mr. Pantlebridge! and I says to Becky—Becky, says I, run quick and get the letter, says I, and now he 'll save us the trouble of sending little Jim up to the house, says I; for you know that'—

"'Where is the letter?' I broke in with, 'and who 's it from?'

"'Becky 's a fetchin' it, for I had to run out, you know, to stop you, because you know you always like to—dear me, and there 's Mr. Battledore sittin' in the back seat, and to think I shouldn't have seen him. How *do* you do, sir? Well, my eyes isn't as good as they was thirty years ago, to be sure, though I can't expect it at my—oh, here 's the letter," and Becky handed the letter to her mistress, who, in turn, delivered it to me. It was superscribed to "Mr. Battledore," and, as I handed it to him and resumed the reins, the old lady went on. 'She said it needn't go up till to-night or to-morrow morning, but, as you happened to be passing, it will save me the'—

"'Good-by, Mrs. Trimmins,' said I, rather rudely, I fear; and, as Mr. Battledore opened the note, the bays again sprang forward.

"'Who is the *she* that the old woman was prating of?' I thought; and I watched Mr. Battledore somewhat curiously as he opened the letter. He gave a hasty glance at the contents, and exclaiming, 'By the Lord Harry, she 's gone!' fell back on the seat motionless. I stopped instantly. I thought he was struck with an apoplectic fit. But he rallied in a moment.

"'Turn back!' said he. 'Turn back this instant; may be we 're not yet too late;' and he flung me the note. I turned the horses' heads towards the village again, without asking why, and read it as we went along. It ran thus. I kept it," said Pantlebridge, addressing me; "and I believe I know it by heart:—

'DEAR PAPA: Forgive me, I know you disliked Harry so much that you would never lis-

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ten to him. He didn't mean to write against you, and I couldn't leave him. Do not think hardly of me. Before you receive this, I shall be your affectionate daughter,

AMERICA A. DIAGRAM.

'P. S. Don't blame Lucretia; she does not know about it.'

"Old Mr. Battledore's face had become so pale that it seemed as if all the color had settled in the tip of his nose. 'Stop!' he exclaimed, as we came opposite Mrs. Trimmins's again. He sprang out of the carriage, and ran into the shop. In a moment he reappeared. 'Drive to the minister's,' said he; 'there is yet time; they have not been gone long.' In a few minutes we checked front of the little parsonage garden gate. A slip-shod servant girl came leisurely down the garden. 'Is my daughter here?' said old Mr. Battledore, preparing to get out. 'No, sir!' 'Has she *been* here?' 'I b'lieve she was,' was the reply. 'Ask Mr. Veritrue to come here for a moment.'

"The slip-shod domestic slapped up the steps, and, in a minute or two, the clergyman came down the walk. He was a tall slender old gentleman, and the white hairs on his temples blew back with the evening breeze from the river, as he advanced towards us.

"'Did my daughter come here to be married?' asked Mr. Battledore, as the minister approached; and his eyes flashed fire.

"'She did, sir,' was the calm response.

"'And how *dared* you marry them without my consent!' continued the questioner, his smothered wrath breaking forth into fury.

"'I *did not* marry them, sir. I refused, knowing who your daughter was.'

"'Why didn't you say so at first, then?' continued Mr. Battledore, impatiently. 'Where have they gone, and how long since?'

"Mr. Veritrue said, 'about twenty minutes,' he supposed, and he did not know what had become of them. I suggested that they had probably crossed the river to ——, where one or two clergymen were established. 'True!' replied Battledore, catching at the suggestion. He wrote something with a pencil on a piece of paper and gave it to me. 'Take this,' said he, as we quitted the parsonage. 'You are younger than I am; get a boat and cross the river. This paper will authorize you to stop the marriage. I can't row, but I can drive to ——, the large town I have mentioned on our side of the stream. There is great probability that they have gone there!'

"I would have refused, for I disliked the office exceedingly; but the old gentleman entreated me so earnestly that I couldn't but promise to do so. At the fork of the road I got out, therefore, and taking my gun with me, that had been lying in the carriage since we left ——, I ran down to the bank of the river. It was getting dark when I got there; the sun having gone down behind a cloud, made it still darker.

"As I glanced my eye over the outlines of the little fleet of pleasure-boats moored there, I was astonished to see the little propeller I have spoken of swinging round preparatory to leaving the wharf. At first I thought Diagram was on board; but, as I looked closer, I recognized Columbus at the crank. I presumed he was going on a stolen fishing excursion, as I knew he sometimes did. 'Columbus!' I shouted, 'Columbus, come back this instant.' Columbus's first impulse was to endeavor to get away; but the boat, though moving swiftly when in a direct line, *turned* very slowly. I levelled my gun at him; it was unloaded. 'Come back this minute, you black rascal,' I cried. I was irritated. Columbus seemed under some counter-influence. He didn't continue to shove off, nor did he approach the land. His teeth chattered, and he began to ensconce himself behind a seat, to be out of range of the gun. I ran down over several of the boats that I perceived were fastened together, and, with a vigorous spring, I reached the little propeller. My first impulse was to administer a kicking to the negro, but he begged so hard, saying he was afraid of 'catching a licking' for going fishing without leave, that I desisted, and bade him turn the bow for the opposite shore, and I stepped towards the little cabin at the afterpart. But Columbus caught tight hold of my coat-tails. He looked perfectly blue as he said: "Don't! don't go in de cabin, for massy sake!'

"'Why *shouldn't* I go in the cabin?' I asked, in astonishment.

"''Case—'case—it 's jis fresh painted,' he stammered, without releasing his hold on my coat-tails. 'I jis fresh painted de interur (interior) dis afternoon.'

"I was rather astonished with this fit of industry on the part of the boy; and, had my mind not been busily engaged with a more anxiously interesting subject, I should have been still more so; but I sat down gloomily by the bow, and watched the ripples as they parted at the passage of the cut-water. Columbus, with the long tiller ropes fastened one on each side of him, sat turning the cranks and looking at me. Thus we moved out into the stream. I felt as if I wanted to talk to some one; so I

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asked Columbus when he had last seen Miss America.

"'Sah!' said Columbus, starting.

"'When did you last see Miss America?' I repeated, more loudly.

"''Bout dinner-time, I s'pect,' replied he, watching me like I have seen a dog watch his master when expecting a cuff.

"'Columbus,' I resumed, sadly, 'I believe *she* has run away with *Mr. Diagram*.'

"Columbus's face assumed a faint expression of a ghastly grin.

"'I'm glad *Mis' Diagram* didn't run away wid *her*,' he answered.

"'What do you mean, you rascal?' said I, turning sharply round.

"Columbus collapsed into insignificance behind the crank, and we pursued our way in silence. I was pleased with the negro's energy. He seemed as anxious as I was to reach the opposite shore; and, thinking he might be tired, I sat down to assist him at the crank. As I turned, I revolved matters over. There were two ministers in ——, and I was uncertain which to go to first. They lived some distance apart. One was a Baptist, and the other a Methodist. In this dilemma, remembering that 'two heads were better than one,' I determined to consult my fellow-laborer.

"'Columbus,' I began, 'do you think they have crossed the river to be married?'

"Columbus said he didn't know, and he turned a shade bluer than before.

"'Columbus,' I continued, 'which minister would they be most likely to go to—the Baptist gentleman or the Methodist?'

"'I guess dey go to de Mefodis gempleman,' replied Columbus, without hesitation.

"'Why?' said I.

"''Case de Baptis 'quire 'mersion and consternation fuss, and de Mefodis marry right off. Nobody don't go to a Baptis.'

"Columbus was a Methodist, I knew, and, therefore, I made allowance for his peculiar views in favor of that sect. Still, I thought there might be some correctness in his supposition, and, as the Methodist minister lived the nearest, I determined to go to him, therefore, myself, and to send Columbus with Mr. Battledore's paper, to the Baptist to stop proceedings. As soon as we touched the shore, I ordered Columbus to run right off to the Baptist gentleman with the paper as soon as he should have made fast the boat, and I immediately hastened to the Methodist. I asked on the wharf if a gentleman and lady had crossed that evening in a boat from Northport. No one had seen any such.

"When I arrived at my destination, I spent at least fifteen minutes in knocking at the front door. At last some one put her head out of an up-stairs window, and informed me that the clergyman was out of town; he had gone that afternoon to attend a funeral. I felt somewhat relieved. 'At least,' thought I, '*he* could not have married them at all events;' and I moved rapidly off to join Columbus at the Baptist's. It was some distance, and of a hot summer night, too; but I reached it at last. Mr. Variance, the servant said, was at home; 'would I walk into the study?' I entered, and paced up and down the room impatiently. I heard distant doors open and shut, and in a few moments Mr. Variance entered. I rapidly explained the object of my visit, and inquired for Columbus.

"'Dear me! dear me!' said Mr. Variance, 'I am extremely sorry, but I have just *married them*. They've only this instant left the house.'

"'What! sir,' said I, 'after the message that the negro gave you?'

"'He gave me none!'

"'None!' said I, aghast.

"'Not a word, sir. Nay, he was even present at the ceremony, and I inferred from the conversation that he had himself brought them across the river in a boat.'

"'The fresh painted cabin! the fresh painted cabin!' I exclaimed.

"And *I* had assisted to convey them across to get married myself. Mr. Variance made a great many apologies. I bade him good-evening, and, picking up my gun, walked leisurely down stairs and out of the house. I moved down the street to the wharf, using my gun unconsciously as a walking-stick. The night-boat for New York was taking passengers on board. I looked out on the river, and, in the first light of the rising moon, I beheld the little propeller more than half way across the stream to Northport. I thought I could distinguish the treacherous Columbus at the crank. The bell tolled on the river steamer. 'All aboard!' shouted the man at the gangway. 'Stop! I'm not!' cried I. I sprang on as the plank moved. In a few moments I was on my way to New York. Next day I sent a letter for my luggage, which was forwarded with an answer, asking me to come and see old Mr. Battledore. I never went, though; and I heard yesterday that Mr. and Mrs. Diagram, with several small Diagrams, are residing with him and 'aunt Lucretia' at the 'Bower in the Bushes.'"

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"Pantlebridge," said I, "I am curious to know if *Columbus* met with no retribution for his misdeeds."

"His master cancelled his indentures (he was *bound*) for having yielded to the bribes of Diagram, and he it was that gave me the information yesterday, while handing me 'coffee and muffin' at 'Taylor's Lower Saloon,' in Broadway."

* * * * * * * * *

"Dinner! gentlemen, dinner!" cried the steward of the "Wanderer," clanging his bell as he perambulated the decks.

"Dinner—eh. Certainly! come, Jack. 'If there was but ae man left in the world, it wad behoove that man to hae his dinner!' for which see Scott's 'Antiquary.'"

"Galt's Entail," said I, as I followed him into the dining saloon.

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ROWENA FONTAINE.: A SKETCH OF SOUTHERN LIFE.
Forsyth, Pauline
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ROWENA FONTAINE.

A SKETCH OF SOUTHERN LIFE.

BY PAULINE FORSYTH.

THERE is something very peculiar about a Southern summer. The thermometer seldom rises as high as it does now and then among the mountains of Maine or New Hampshire, and each day, as it comes, seems a very endurable one. But it is in this long continuance that the true secret of its power lies. With terrible patience, the sun girds himself day after day, and week after week, to run the same race. With an eye at once bright and pitiless, he looks down on those who have crept too near the throne of his power, and while for the less adventurous ones, he has days of relenting, when he veils his face with soft clouds, or lets his beams fall on them sparkling through the light rain, upon them, the audacious intruders, from June till September, he turns one burning gaze, unflinching and unbroken, excepting when he summons all his mighty forces—the wind, the lightning, and the storm—and lets them go free to their utmost.

The early part of the summer was easy enough to bear, and I had amused myself over my exaggerated dread of it; but before it had ended, I had learned that there is a power in perseverance more subtle and subduing than in intensity or vehemence. My thoughts were constantly roving to the cool recesses that my childish feet had haunted; and one day, sitting with Virginia Percy and Rowena Fontaine, I began to describe a particular spring, welling out from a mossy rock in the side of a mountain, whose waters, in the heat of summer noon, were as cool as if their unfathomable depths were encased in ice, and as clear and bright as crystal. No Bacchante, deprived of her goblet, could have dwelt with more longing pathos on her past enjoyments, than did I descant on the deliciousness of that water, which, in my childhood, I had drank after the fashion of Gideon's chosen men, out of my hand, and which, when years had given me the inventive faculty, said to be peculiar to my countrymen, I had been used to quaff from a cup formed of a twisted leaf.

Virginia was one of those persons who, with the power of gratifying almost every wish, never seem to indulge in any. She had no whims; no "desires for the unattainable," or caprices of any kind. Duty was her guiding star, and to herself and the world in general she was rigid and severe; but to the few whom she called her friends, she was indulgent to the fullest extent. All their little follies and weaknesses were a part of themselves, and, as such, she liked and yielded to them. If it had not been for this peculiarity of hers, she would not have been half so lovable. Therefore, while listening to the account of this remote spring, as inaccessible then to me as if it had been in the top of an enchanted mountain, and guarded by three fiery dragons, she was revolving in her mind some plan to make me forget for a time my great deprivation.

"There is a place near here that is said to be always cool," said she, at last. "It is where the Ashoba winds between two hills, and the trees grow very close and large about it. We used to go there a great deal when we were children, for there were a number of enormous grape-vines hanging from one tree to another, enough to make swings for all of us."

"Let us go there," said I. "One cool breeze would be delightful to me."

"Suppose we make up a party," said Rowena, "a pic-nic, and go. It has been so dull here for the last six weeks!"

Quiet ruralizing was not to Rowena's taste.

The idea pleased us, and after consulting Mr. and Mrs. Percy, we began to make preparations for it. At first, we intended to have the party a very select one; but, finding that the plan seemed to please the popular mind, and that it would be difficult to avoid giving offence if we carried out our intentions, we yielded to the tide, and giving up the care of inviting the guests to Rowena, who, we were sure, would do the business thoroughly—in fact, Virginia said, we might as well have asked a bellman to go round and summon all the Loudonites to a grand barbecue—we prepared ourselves for a day of uninterrupted enjoyment.

Our road for some distance lay over an almost level plain, whose hardly perceptible undulations were covered by tall grass, faded, yellow, and dry by the summer heat; occasionally, we caught glimpses of the river rolling slowly along, its current heavy and turbid with the rich soil

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through which it had passed. I had never before appreciated the beauty of meadows, with their close green carpet, or mountain streams, dashing their clear waters from rock to rock, as now, when, by force of contrast, they rose vividly in my mind. I had begun to despair of seeing anything that would compensate me for rising at four o'clock in the morning, when suddenly the carriage turned into a grove of trees, some of which must have been old enough to have sheltered the first white man who had wandered through that part of the country.

"Isn't this beautiful?" asked Virginia, as a turn in the road brought us in sight of the river, winding cool and dark under the overhanging hills.

I assented warmly, and sprang out of the carriage, with the avowed intention of spending the rest of the summer in that secluded spot. I found plenty who professed their willingness to join me in my retreat, for more than half Loudon were already assembled at the rendezvous, and were all prepared to enter with spirit into the only sociable amusement that had offered itself for weeks. The pic-nic went on very much like all others of the same kind. There was the usual amount of rambling and sitting in shady places with little knots of selected companions; the usual medley at the collation; and perhaps rather more than the usual amount of flirting.

This last excess was probably owing to Rowena, whose nature and education had both combined to make her the most finished flirt it has ever been my fortune to meet. She was a Napoleon in her way, and, like him, she had one constant opponent always lying in wait, watching for every vulnerable or weak point, and trusting to time and chance for a victory that he could gain in no other way. It was rumored and believed that she had refused twenty eligible offers, besides some half-dozen others that were considered doubtful, or not worth counting. Mr. Maxwell Latimer, the gentleman who had predetermined to play the part of Wellington in this mimic conflict, was supposed to have endured more defeats than he was willing to own.

It was always an inexhaustible source of amusement to me to watch Rowena with her train of followers, and see how she contrived to keep them all occupied in attending to her whims, and interested in her caprices. Restless and volatile, full of life and spirit, and outraging all rules of etiquette, there was yet an innate propriety that kept her within certain bounds; and even in her wildest freaks, there was something that showed that she was a lady, and that she was to be treated like one. She reminded me of an unbroken colt, rebelling against all control of bit or bridle, but obeying in every wild movement an inner law of grace and gentleness of spirit.

She was not beautiful, though she was constantly called so. The only perfect feature in her face was her mouth, which was faultless both in shape and expression. Her hair, too, was generally admired. It was of a soft auburn tint—it had been red when she was a child—and fell in natural ringlets around her face. It had been very long and abundant; but, not many months before, it had been cut during a severe illness, and now had but just grown long enough to allow Rowena to twist it up with some difficulty. Tresses were constantly slipping from the comb, and hanging around her neck, or falling over her temples in picturesque and becoming confusion. One part of her headdress had perplexed me a little when she laid aside her riding-hat. Where could she have got those long curls that floated over her comb at the back of her head? Her hair could not surely have grown so in a single night. She soon solved the mystery for me herself.

"What do you think of my hair, Pauline?" she asked, in a whisper.

"It looks very well; but those curls?"

"They are Aunt Lucy's; some she used to wear when she was a girl. She put them in for me, and they looked so pretty I would not let her take them off."

"You will lose them before the day is over," said I.

Rowena laughed, and shook her head.

"That would be dreadful!" said she. "Just imagine it, Pauline. I should die with mortification."

"You will never get home with those curls safe," replied I.

My prediction was fulfilled in an unexpected manner late in the afternoon. I was sitting in a pleasant nook, talking with a lady, a Mrs. Judson, and resting after a long and fatiguing ramble, when I heard a laughing voice calling—"Cousin Anne, have you your needle-case with you?"

Looking up, we saw Rowena at a little distance, holding up to our view for sympathy and assistance a large rent in her muslin dress.

"Mr. Latimer did it, and now he is to help me to mend it," said she, while the delinquent gentleman, hardly seeming as distressed as the occasion required, approached Mrs. Judson for the implements, with which she always provided herself on such occasions.

Rowena seated herself not far from us, and

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began her task, which promised to occupy her for some time; and Mr. Latimer, delighted to find that at last he had an opportunity for a little uninterrupted chat, threw himself down by her. After the usual fashion with people of her description, Rowena's conversations were generally carried on in too low a tone to be heard, except by the one person for whom her remarks were intended, so that I had no idea of the purport of the whispers that passed between Mr. Latimer and herself; but I could see that the gentleman himself was not satisfied with them, and leaned back with a doubtful and troubled expression.

His eyes rested admiringly on the softly rounded shoulder, gleaming white through the thin muslin; on the delicate throat, and the graceful head, with its soft rich hair, slightly disarranged by the heat and exercise of the day, and now lying in thick waves and masses. I knew by the motion of his lips and hand that he was asking for a lock. I saw that it was merrily, but decidedly refused. His lips closed firmly, and "I bide my time" was legible in every line of his face. He played a moment idly with the scissors, then slowly raising his hand, he cautiously severed one of the floating curls from the rest; and a second "Rape of the Lock" was achieved.

Rowena had sat very still during this little operation, which Mr. Latimer had thought so dexterously performed; so still, that I was sure, by a slight trembling about her lips, and a sly flicker of her eye, that she knew exactly what he was about. He held the stolen curl triumphantly before her.

"See, Miss Rowena, I will keep this while I live," said he.

"Will you? Would you like the others? You are quite welcome. I am sure Aunt Lucy would be very glad to give them to you;" and with a mischievous laugh, Rowena flung the curls into his hand, and hastily finishing her dress, sprang off.

Mrs. Judson and I joined in her merry laugh, and Mr. Latimer could not repress a smile as he threw aside the curls and joined us.

"I hope you are satisfied now, Maxwell," said Mrs. Judson. "If Rowena had had the slightest feeling for you, she could never have done such a thing as that."

"No, Cousin Anne," said he; for Mrs. Judson was his cousin, too, although he and Rowena were not connected, except by that slender link; nearly all the families in Loudon were related in a very complicated and confusing manner. "No, Cousin Anne, until Rowena proves her indifference to me by marrying some one else, I shall not give up my hopes of marrying her. I have loved her for the last ten years, ever since she was a little girl, and her father called her in and made her say 'Young Lochinvar' for me. I determined then that, if possible, she should be my wife; and my resolution is as strong now as it ever was."

"How often has she refused you, Mack?" asked Mrs. Judson, a little maliciously, I thought.

Mr. Latimer hesitated a moment, and then replied, with a reluctant smile—

"Only seven times; but I began, you know, when she was thirteen."

"You could not have done a more foolish thing, if you had wanted her to accept you. But, it seems to me, if you had half the good sense I have always given you credit for, you would long ago have dismissed all thoughts of one so light and trifling as Rowena Fontaine is, wasting her time and thoughts indiscriminately on every man she meets. If she has any heart at all left by this time, which I doubt, it certainly is not worth the trouble of gaining."

Mr. Latimer did not seem pleased with these severe strictures.

"You judge her very harshly," said he; "she is only more full of life and animation than her companions. When she marries, she will make a good, affectionate wife, I am sure. She is a devoted daughter."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Judson, "that is the best point in her character; if it were not for her love to her father, I should think her incapable of strong feeling of any kind."

After a little more conversation of the same nature, Mr. Latimer rose to seek Rowena once more; and soon afterwards, the party dispersed.

Not many weeks after, Rowena's father was seized with a fever, and brought suddenly to the gates of death. She hung over him in the deepest sorrow; for, excepting her young brother, he was her only near relative in the world.

"What shall I do without you, father? What shall I do?" sobbed she.

"If you were only married, dear child; if you would only marry Mr. Latimer, it would be a great relief to my mind. I should feel then that I left you with some one who would take even better care of you than I have done. He was with me this morning, telling me how much and how long he had loved you; and I promised him I would speak to you about it. I would not urge you against your wishes, but you and Robert are both so young and thoughtless, that it is agony to me, worse than all my other sufferings, to think of leaving you unprotected."

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"Would it make you happier, father, if I were to promise to marry Mr. Latimer?"

"Yes, dear, if you think you could love him well enough."

"I like him better than any of the others; not as well as I do you, father. I never could do that, and so I did not care to leave you. But I like him very much; and if it could make you more easy, you may tell him so."

Accordingly, Mr. Fontaine sent for Mr. Latimer, and had a long conference with him, the result of which was, that they both entreated Rowena to allow the ceremony that was to decide her fate for life to be immediately performed. Mr. Fontaine knew her fickle temperament, and though he did not doubt her sincerity at the moment, he dreaded to trust her to the chances of a year's delay.

Rowena consented, as she would have done to any request of her father's at that hour, and the clergyman was summoned. Mr. Fontaine collected all his energies to listen to the office, that seemed doubly solemn from the place and time in which it was performed; and then, all excitement passing away, he sank so rapidly, that, for some hours, Rowena hung tremblingly over him, dreading that each moment should be his last.

For two days and nights, his life hung fluttering on every breath, and, during all that time, although the house was filled with sympathizing relatives, anxious to make themselves of use, Rowena could not be persuaded to leave her father's room even for an hour's rest, or for the food she needed. She sat with his hand in hers, and her eyes fastened upon him, as if she thought that, if she loosened, by the slightest withdrawal, the strong bond her love had upon him, his soul, already half freed from its earthly tenement, would take its flight forever.

During the latter part of this time, the doctor had begun to give her a little encouragement; and early on the morning of the third day, finding that his patient had sunk into a deep slumber, he insisted that Rowena should lie down in another room, if only for an hour, assuring her that he looked on her father as almost out of danger. At last, she consented, on condition of being called the moment her father moved, and sought her own room. On opening the door, she found it already fully tenanted. Two aunts were sleeping in her bed, and three cousins were crowded into a couch hastily prepared on the floor. Judging from this, that all the other chambers must be occupied, she turned to the parlor, and threw herself on the sofa, intending to allow herself but one hour's sleep at the utmost; but, worn out with her long watching, her slumber soon became so profound, that the household movements, hushed and subdued by the presence of illness, failed to disturb her.

It was noon before she awoke, and, although the shutters had been kept closed for fear the light might rouse her, yet the sun, ever true to its one purpose of melting the very souls of men, had managed to force enough rays into the room, through various chinks and crevices, to enable her to discern all the objects within it dimly; but her attention was for the time abstracted from all outward things. She lay in a half-sleeping reverie, in which the feelings and events of the last few days passed before her languid mind, as if self-summoned, uncontrolled by any volition of her own. Suddenly, amid the thronging shadows, one started into life with a reality and vividness so striking that the rest faded away and left it to itself.

Was it possible that the event she had never looked forward to but as the possible and probable termination of a long course of pleasure and conquest, had suddenly come upon her to cut it short in its commencement; and that she did not feel the least sorry that it was so; she lay meditating upon it.

"Married—married"—she murmured to herself.

"Yes, dearest, married at last," said some one bending over her; and, looking up, Rowena met Mr. Latimer's glance, in which, with the affection, there was a little triumph blended.

"How did you get in here?" asked Rowena, starting up.

"I came to see how your father was, and I am glad to tell you that he is much better; and finding that you were sleeping here I thought I would wait till you awoke."

"I must go and see how father is," said Rowena, springing out of the room before he could detain her.

In course of time Mr. Fontaine recovered; and the next topic that interested the people of Loudon, who fulfilled the apostolic injunction, and "looked every man upon the things of his neighbor," as literally as most inhabitants of small towns are accustomed to do, was how Rowena would conduct herself in the new estate, for which she had seemed so little prepared.

She disappointed all the ill-boding Cassandras of the place, by developing a talent for housekeeping, which amounted to a genius, and absorbed all the energies of her most energetic nature. Her husband bought one of the finest places to be obtained in the neighborhood, and in a few years she had made it one of the pret

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tiest. Instead of breaking her husband's heart by her vagaries, as some village savans had predicted, she made him the most delicious pickles and preserves. I have seen her working over the plums with as much serious intentness as though her one object in life was to preserve them whole; and instead of involving him in duels without end, she brought on an attack of gout by her good dinners; which Mr. Latimer did not seem to consider any fault on her part, but rather an excess of virtue.

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SUSAN HARTT.
Villager, A
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Apr 1855; 50, American Periodicals
pg. 343

SUSAN HARTT.

BY A VILLAGER.

THERE are in the world some persons who, when they go out of it, go in the same demonstrative, noisy way in which they have lived here, crashing and thundering, and calling on all around to witness the work of dissolution; not unlike a vast ship when fire consumes its structure. The fall of others is sudden and proudly grand, like the oak that beautifies a public walk or an ancestral house, when unseen rot has for ages consumed its inner life, till a fierce lightning stroke, or a resistless wind, has laid it low, revealing in a moment the subtle work that has so long been advancing, and leaving a great waste, a desolate place, over which people come to lament and wonder.

The aged righteous, as Holy Scripture saith, goes down to the grave like a shock of corn fully ripe. Some loose their hold on earthly life as noiselessly as one of the million leaves that drop from their parent tree, not even making a ripple on the stream which bears it to the eternal ocean. The passing away of others is as when the last flower withers from the stem where its companions grew and faded, vanishing, we scarce know how, and mourned not so much for the sake of the living as because it has no successor.

Like the dropping leaf or fading flower was the death of my quiet neighbor, gentle Susan Hartt. She had lived among us twenty years, and in all that period no one had heard her speak much of herself. From a home in another State, which death had desolated, she came hither to live with one of her few surviving relatives, a distant kinsman, and in his family she stayed, an honored and beloved guest. I was told her history, not an eventful or startling one, yet marked in early life by a more than common series of bereavements. Very often, I was asked: "Pray, who is Susan Hartt? and why does she stay at Judge Hamilton's?"

> 'And oftener still the question would be:
> 'Susan is an old maid, isn't she?'"

For Susan's dress had always that neat and perfectly well-arranged air that we are apt to

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think the peculiarity of single women. She had a slight figure, and was not in any degree a beauty; but her large, soft, brown eyes and glossy hair, always parted smoothly under a plain cap, gave a pleasing effect to features otherwise without interest.

At twenty, Susan was a bride, and at twenty-five a widow. Her two children followed their father to the silent land, and next her parents died. During the more than thirty years of her continued pilgrimage, Susan formed no new ties.

We never met her at a gay party, or making fashionable calls. When we saw her at home, and asked about her own health, which a colorless complexion indicated was far from vigorous, she would answer, quietly—

"I am very well, but not quite strong. I have to be careful of myself."

But her seat in church was seldom vacant; and those who, as is our neighborly country custom, watched at the bedside of the sick, or came together to lay out the dead, often found one of their number to be Susan Hartt. She never said a word about "dreadful spells of sickness" undergone by herself, though none could see her without knowing that she must often have suffered from pain and weakness. She never spoke of her husband or children, nor gave a circumstantial account of their diseases; themes that are too often resorted to, by way of enlivening the spirits of an invalid, or enhancing the solemnity of a death-chamber. We never saw her weep, and yet there was a quiet sympathy in the touch of her hand, a moisture in her meek eyes, that spoke better than language, and to the sorrowful proved more comforting than wordy efforts at consolation. Susan was not a wise, a learned, or a notable woman; she was only a good and quiet one.

"I am astonished!" somebody would say, on hearing that Susan had been a wife and mother. "She never speaks of her family. She must be a woman of little sensibility."

True, she never carried her sorrows out into the world "for daws to peck at," and yet, who knows but that she lived more constantly in the past, and felt her bereavements more keenly than the woman who takes all possible seasons to tell you "what an awful disease her poor husband died of; how worn out she got attending him; and how she shall always miss him, even if she marries another." And the dear little ones that so many summers ago nestled in Susan's bosom were no doubt, in imagination, as often at her side as though she had been continually telling of their pretty childish ways, and deploring their early loss.

At least, there were some of us who thought so long before Susan herself joined those who had gone first; and now we know it to be true.

Only two weeks had passed since I met Susan in the sick-room of a poor Christian sister more forlorn than she, for the woman has no near kin, and lives quite alone; a hard-working seamstress; and when ill is dependent upon parish bounty. A friend came in and told me—

"Mrs. Hartt is dead. Will you come round with me, and help make her grave-clothes?"

I had not heard that she was ill, and I said so.

"It would not be in keeping with her life to have her sickness make much stir," the friend remarked. "She was always so quiet, you know."

It was but four days since she had been stricken with fatal disease; and a fragile frame like hers could offer no resistance. With subdued feelings, but without tears, we entered on the melancholy work. There were no bitter wailings, no frantic outbursts of grief in the household of death, but on every face there seemed to sit an earnest solemnity.

Her kinsman said: "Let her head be uncovered, as it used to be when she was a girl."

So we took off the cap, and started back with whispered words of surprise and sad pleasure, as the long, soft, brown tresses, with not a streak of gray among them, floated over the pillow. It was foolish, perhaps, but my first thought was, how happy her husband will be to see her with the same dark hair that covered her young head when he called her his bride, and when they parted.

It was not with idly curious eyes that her private chamber was entered, yet we looked with interest on some mementos of her early life, to which a relative called our notice. There was a small mahogany box filled with the clothes which her children had worn, diminutive garments of an obsolete fashion, that we did not dare to touch. To handle them would have appeared like profanation. And the husband's miniature, that at any other time we might have commented upon as the work of an unskilful artist, seemed invested with a halo from the light of changeless love, that for so many years had held it as a sacred thing. Criticism would have been irreverent.

"That little wardrobe," they told us, "she had duly once a year taken out, looked over, and aired; then quietly restored to its keeping-place."

Well, Susan's funeral is past. It was on a still September day, when the hush on Nature's

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face harmonized with the noiseless life of her whose obsequies we met to witness; and though scarce a week has elapsed, outside the family circle where she dwelt, we hear her name no more. In the rush and whirl of life's tide, the severed leaf has floated off and vanished. The withered flower has dropped.

But, if we pause a moment to think, a sense of the vastness of the change to Susan is almost overwhelming. It would be entirely so, could we but comprehend it. A husband and two children waiting, we may well believe, to welcome her. Her disembodied being thrilled with joy to embrace those from whom she has so long been sundered; the shadows left behind; the reality felt and seen. How very near, and yet how little thought of is that mysterious existence! Some sharp and sudden pang; some random, misdirected blow from human hands may lift for us the curtain that shrouds its entrance. "An arrow let easily into the side" was the courier sent to warn Susan of that thitherward journey, the end of which has brought her such an unalloyed reunion.

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THE GOSSIP OF WOODVALE.
MRS. M E ROBINSON
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pg. 208

THE GOSSIP OF WOODVALE.

BY MRS. M. E. ROBINSON.

MRS. CROCKER was one of those restless, prying characters, who continually observe the conduct of their neighbors without once turning a serious glance toward themselves. She studied other people, but not to discover their virtues. She never put on her far-seeing glasses to look after good traits and commendable qualities. She was, emphatically, a prophetess of evil, being seldom known to predict anything but misfortune for any individual upon whom she exercised her intuitive art.

Mrs. Crocker was thoughtless and selfish; thoughtless, because she did not pause to consider what might be the result of propagating unfounded reports; and selfish, for the reason that she never attached importance to any one's happiness but her own. She dealt wholly in surmises and suspicions, and was always ready to declare the prospects and intentions of her neighbors for any given length of time. Had she kept these surmises entirely to herself, nobody, probably, would have been injured by them. But here was the difficulty; it seemed to constitute the sole pleasure of her life to communicate them to a chosen few of the same ilk, who sought her when they desired a choice bit of gossip, and never repeated the tales which they heard without exaggeration.

We know that words are but air, yet, though apparently insignificant, they sometimes produce incalculable mischief; and indeed nearly all the great events that have agitated the world, dethroned kings, leveled empires, overthrown governments, given nations to the sword, and devastated kingdoms and countries, have been produced by words, either vocally expressed or written. In some respects words are weak, and in others powerful to stir up discord, or soothe the angry passions of men. Nor is it wonderful that one thoughtless, surmising, mischief-making woman can irreparably injure honest, respectable, industrious citizens, and disturb the enjoyment and equanimity of a country village.

We will give an incident illustrative of the character of Mrs. Crocker, which we trust will not be uninteresting to the reader:—

Being at a lecture one evening, she observed that a young lady, with whom she was but slightly acquainted, looked quite pale, and coughed several times. On the following morning, she hastened to tell Mrs. Laning—a sympathizing spirit—that "Miss Moore was in a quick consumption."

The listener was, of course, shocked, and inquired what had produced such a melancholy result.

"I have my suspicions," replied Mrs. Crocker, mysteriously.

Mrs. Laning was now full of eagerness to hear what was to be developed, and pushed her chair nearer to her wise neighbor.

"I suspect that she and her beau have had a *falling out*," was the solemn rejoinder.

"Of all things in this world, I declare it 's mournful!" exclaimed Mrs. Laning.

"Such a pretty creature!" added the other.

"And so intelligent!" resumed Mrs. Laning.

"Well, death is the common lot of all," sighed her companion, sentimentally, and the gossips parted.

Before two days had elapsed, it was currently reported that Miss Moore was at the "point of death," to which dreadful condition she had been reduced by an unfortunate "falling out" with her lover.

The subject was talked of by many who scarcely knew the young lady, and much sympathy manifested by them.

Had this rumor stopped here, no great harm would have resulted; but it was otherwise. The young lady, whom the surmises of Mrs. Crocker had reduced to such a lamentable situation, had been receiving the addresses of a young man who occupied a place of trust in a large mercantile establishment at Philadelphia, which was some two hundred miles distant from the town of Woodvale.

Now it happened that one of the village traders, who had heard the story concerning Miss Moore's dangerous illness, was going directly to that city. Arrived there, he considered it his duty to acquaint Mr. Maxwell (for that was the lover's name) with a fact that would naturally interest him so much.

This was all very well on his part, and the result of the communication was just what might have been expected. Maxwell immediately started for Woodvale, although his services were very much needed at that time by his employers. Imagine his feelings, if you can, during

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his journey, and the anxiety and suspense which agitated his mind as he approached the village.

As ill luck would have it, the bell of the little church was tolling, and he saw persons entering, and congregated about the door. The spectacle filled him with alarm, and all his gloomy forebodings seemed realized, for he was fully persuaded that the object of his solicitude was no more, and the friends and neighbors were rendering her the last tribute of love. His brain reeled as he advanced, and it was with difficulty that he could control his emotions.

"Who is dead?" he asked, with a tremulous voice, of an individual who was sitting upon the steps of the church.

"A young woman, I believe, sir," he replied.

Maxwell now imagined that his worst fears were confirmed.

"Do you know her name?" he continued, with increasing perturbation.

The man was a stranger in the place, and did not know. Maxwell turned hurriedly away, and proposed the same question to a lady who was at that moment entering.

"It's a sad case, sir," she answered, with a mournful shake of the head. "It's young Mrs. Stephens, and she leaves an afflicted husband and a poor little infant."

"Thank God!" exclaimed the young man, earnestly, and then rushed down the street, without pausing to hear more.

By a singular coincidence, it happened that the woman of whom he made this inquiry was Mrs. Crocker. Hearing him make such a strange rejoinder, and seeing him leave the spot so precipitately, she drew her own inferences from the same, and the moment the services were over, hastened to see Mrs. Laning.

She found that lady ready to receive the smallest favors in the way of news, and willing to make the most of them. Mrs. Crocker relieved her mind by informing her friend that she had seen Maxwell, "and I do believe," she added, "that his mind is unsettled; for he thanked God when I told him that Mrs. Stephens was dead and had left a poor babe."

"Heartless man!" cried the other lady, indignantly.

"No; he is to be pitied; for I'm sure his mind can't be right," returned Mrs. Crocker; "and I suppose it's all on account of Miss Moore. I shouldn't be surprised if he jumped off the bridge into the river!"

"Why, Mrs. Crocker, how you do talk! It does seem as though you see everything that's going on!"

This last remark encouraged and flattered our gossip not a little

"I always think it best to keep my eyes about me. There's nothing like looking ahead. My motto is, 'look ahead and see who's coming,' and nothing takes me by surprise, as it were."

Meantime, young Maxwell hurried to the residence of Miss Moore, and rang the bell with nervous haste. His surprise cannot well be conceived when that lady herself opened the door, looking as well as he had ever seen her. He was suddenly relieved of a great burden of anxiety, and upon informing her of the nature of the report that had reached him so directly, his astonishment was greatly enhanced by a declaration from her that she had not been ill, having enjoyed, on the contrary, very good health since they had parted.

Irritated by the seeming duplicity of the trader, whose name was Lewis, Maxwell addressed him a note, reproving him sharply for perpetrating a practical joke so cruel and unmanly.

When Lewis received this missive, he was nearly as much surprised as Maxwell had been upon finding the report which had brought him to Woodvale untrue. He immediately called upon the young man, demanding to know what he meant; and was told in return that the communication he had made in Philadelphia was entirely false.

"That's very singular," replied Lewis, "for I heard the subject of Miss Moore's illness discussed on several occasions, and at one time, particularly, in my store, by Mrs. Laning and Mrs. Jarvis. I really believed that the young lady was very near death."

As the trader perceived that he had not quite satisfied Maxwell, he resolved to question some of the parties from whom he had received the erroneous impression. He met Mrs. Jarvis on the way to the store, and she knew nothing whatever of the matter save what she had learned of Mrs. Laning; "but everybody," she added, "knew that Miss Moore wasn't expected to live, for it was the town's talk."

On the following day, the gentleman saw Mrs. Laning, who averred that she derived her knowledge principally from Mrs. Crocker; "but," she continued, "it's no secret, because the whole village knows all about it. And there's young Maxwell, he's come all the way from Philadelphia to see her, and they do say he acts odd."

"Odd?" said Lewis, inquiringly.

"Oh, very odd, sir! He's made some of the queerest expressions, and it is reported that yesterday he jumped off the bridge into the river."

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"I can't understand this," said the trader, musingly. "There 's something inexplicable about it."

"Have you seen him?" asked the gossip.

"Yes; and he assured me that Miss Moore was never in better health in her life."

"Poor man! I was afraid it would affect him in that way. They say there was never so many insane people as there are this year."

Wishing Mr. Lewis good-morning, Mrs. Laning went her way to scatter the contents of her budget as opportunity offered. The former returned to his counting-room, completely mystified and at fault; for he could not decide upon the merits of the case, having made no inquiries about it, except in the instances mentioned.

To resume the thread of the story. Maxwell, being somewhat indisposed, passed three or four days at Woodvale, which time was well improved by Mrs. Crocker and her aids. The reader will be prepared for the announcement that it was soon believed by many of the townspeople that Maxwell was crazy. The mischief went further, and was productive of still more serious results.

Mrs. Jarvis's husband was a dry-goods merchant, and frequently went to Philadelphia to make purchases, and it happened that business of this character made it necessary for him to visit that city at that particular time. Among other wholesale establishments which he entered, chance led him to the very one where Maxwell had been employed, and where his return was momentarily expected.

Learning that he was from the town of Woodvale, one of the partners of the concern inquired if he knew the young man referred to.

"I know him by sight," said Jarvis; "but I am not personally acquainted with him. He is now, I understand, in quite a bad way."

"Indeed! What is the matter?" continued the merchant.

"Well, they say he is quite unsettled in his mind."

"Is it possible!"

"I 'm afraid it 's true; for Mrs. Laning told my wife that he had attempted to commit suicide by jumping off the bridge into the river."

"Occasioned by grief, doubtless, on account of the illness of the young lady to whom he is engaged."

"Well, that 's very doubtful, although I thought so at first; but just as I was leaving the village, I met her brother, who assured me positively that his sister was in perfect health."

"Then the story which he told me with so much apparent sincerity was a sheer fabrication. I regret this exceedingly, for I liked the young man, and was disposed to befriend him. 'Will you be kind enough to be the bearer of a note to him?"

Jarvis expressed his willingness to do so, and the merchant penned the following lines:—

"Mr. Maxwell—

"We think we shall be able to do without your services. We regret to hear that you are so much indisposed. Hoping you may soon recover your wonted health, we remain,

"Yours, &c., Niles & Brothers."

Maxwell supposed that he had been mystified on several occasions previous to the reception of this most extraordinary epistle; but he now began to imagine that he was never really puzzled until the present moment. Why did "Niles & Brothers" dismiss him in this abrupt manner, without mentioning the cause of their dissatisfaction? What did they mean by alluding, as they had, to his health? Certainly they could not have heard about his having contracted a slight cold, for that was not a matter of sufficient importance to claim attention.

While he was returning from the post-office, cogitating as above, whom should he meet but Mr. Lewis, to whom he at once showed the inexplicable note?

"I am confident," said that gentleman, "that this means something which is not fully comprehended. I see that it was dropped into the office here, and was probably brought from Philadelphia by one of our townspeople, possibly Mr. Jarvis; for I understand that he has recently purchased goods. If you wish it, I will step in and see him."

Maxwell assured Lewis that he should like to have him do so. The latter accordingly called at the store of Mr. Jarvis, and learned the purport of the conversation that had induced "Niles & Brothers" to dismiss the young man from their employ. This new version of Maxwell's insanity reminded the trader of the remarks made by Mrs. Laning touching the same matter.

He hastened back to acquaint Maxwell of the unpleasant scandal that was afloat, and that it probably owed its origin to a bevy of inveterate gossips that continually kept the neighborhood in a turmoil.

Ineffectual attempts were thereupon made to trace the rumor to its proper source; but after following it through half a dozen channels—Mrs. Laning and Mrs. Jarvis being among them—it finally ended with Mrs. Crocker, who averred herself as innocent of the whole "as a saint in the skies." She only knew what Mrs. Laning, Jarvis, and others too numerous to mention, had

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talked of at different times in her hearing. "She was so retired, went out so little, and kept herself to herself so much, that the President of the United States might sicken and die, and she never know a word about it. She often told her husband that there might be a war with China or with England, and she be none the wiser for it."

Of course, no satisfaction could be obtained. Thoughtless, irresponsible parties had done the mischief, and there appeared to be no means of redress. Maxwell had been deeply injured by those who felt no sympathy for him, nor seemed conscious that their conduct merited the severest rebuke.

Several of the most respectable and influential citizens instantly wrote to "Niles & Brothers," explaining the case as well as possible, and bearing unequivocal testimony to the sanity and high moral worth of Maxwell. But unfortunately they had engaged another person, and it was several months before they were able to offer him a situation.

Mrs. Crocker remained quite quiet (for her) until the excitement consequent upon her last piece of work had subsided, when another grand opportunity offered to set her inquisitive disposition into active operation.

A stranger came to the town of Woodvale, and purchased one of the best houses he could find, which was situated not far from the residence of our gossip. He was a man of about thirty-five, of gentlemanly deportment, scrupulously polite, but distant and reserved. He had no wife, children, nor relative, to the knowledge of any one in that vicinity; his affairs being managed exclusively by one servant, a stout and rather surly-looking Hibernian. The stranger passed by the name of Harlow, although not a single inhabitant of Woodvale appeared to enjoy any acquaintance with him. If he went out to take air and exercise, his hat was usually slouched over his eyes, and his gaze riveted to the earth. If a townsman bowed to him, he bowed in return, but made no further advances.

Mr. Harlow had no visits from the citizens of Woodvale, nor seemed to desire any. The natural effect of all this mystery upon Mrs. Crocker may easily be guessed; her rest was disturbed, and she felt it incumbent upon her to discover who the stranger was, what he did for a living, why he kept himself so retired, with many other items which we cannot enumerate. She had now ample means of putting all her surmising powers into service; nor did she shrink at all from the task before her, but addressed herself to this new endeavor with a courage and perseverance worthy of a better cause.

Although apparently unconscious of the fact, Mr. Harlow was daily besieged in his castle by the over-curious eyes of Mrs. Crocker and her two able colleagues, Laning and Jarvis.

She watched the stranger's house constantly, from a window commanding a view of the same, but could see nothing to reward her pains. The inner shutters were generally closed, and the same dull, monotonous, incomprehensible, and altogether unbearable mystery prevailed.

Our gossip lost her appetite, and was unable to attend to her domestic duties, so deeply was she interested in this new field of observation upon which she had entered. She used to pass by the dwelling without any other object in view than that of gratifying her curiosity by peering into the yard and casting wistful glances toward the heavy, old-fashioned knocker upon the door, and the Venetian blinds that forbade her truant glances to penetrate within.

Mrs. Crocker was not the only one who was aching to know what the stranger evidently did not care about having known; and being at the head of her profession in the place, she felt that her honor was somewhat at stake, and that her well-known reputation for perspicacity would suffer, were she not the first to arrive at Harlow's secrets. She surmised many things, but none of her surmises seemed to hit the popular taste, or make any great commotion in the village.

"It's very extraordinary," she said one day to Mrs. Laning; "and, for my part, I'm sorry to have anybody in town who is afraid to come out and mix with the rest of us. You may depend there's something wrong. I wouldn't have such a troubled conscience as that man has for the whole world."

"It's a disgrace to the town, I think," was the reply.

"That's just what I told Mr. Crocker, and if I was a man, I'd go and ask Mr. Harlow if he intended to bring misfortune upon this peaceable community."

"I do believe that you're the only woman of spirit among us! I think the matter ought to be brought before the selectmen," returned Mrs. Laning.

"If women only had their rights, something could be done; but as long as they're deprived of 'em, of course their moral sense must be blunted, so that they positively don't know when bad examples are set for the rising generation. But being born free and equal, with certain inalienable rights, I would respectfully ask any person, irrespective of politics or religion, what right this Mr. Harlow has to come here and shut himself up in that way?"

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"The answer must be unanimous. He has no business whatever to run such a rig as he has, and set such an unwarrantable example for young people. Why, what would the world come to if we should all shut ourselves up and have an Irish servant to wait on us!"

"The idea really shocks me!" added Mrs. Crocker, swaying solemnly to and fro in her chair, and looking as though some mighty misfortune was about to involve the whole community in universal ruin.

On her way home, she devised what she considered a most ingenious plot for unmasking the degenerate Harlow.

The next morning, dressed in her best, she slowly approached the mansion so inexplicably mysterious. Confidently she pushed open the gate, and tripping affectedly up the graveled walk, daintily grasped the brass knocker.

She thumped away some time before hearing any indications of life within, and then, to her joy, footsteps were heard in the hall. Her heart beat with expectation as the door was cautiously opened by Timothy Donigan, the servant.

"Is Mr. Harlow in?" she inquired, with a simper.

"It wouldn't be strange," said Tim.

"I have business with him," said Mrs. Crocker, with an air of importance.

"And what's the nathure in that same?" asked Tim, keeping the door ajar just enough to allow him to thrust his nose out.

"I prefer to tell your master my business," answered the lady, bridling up, and vainly trying to look into the hall.

"And sure, ma'am, I 'tind to all the bizness meself," resumed Tim, with admirable nonchalance.

"*You!*"

"Ivery bit iv it intirely, ma'am."

"His money matters?"

"Ivery farthin'."

"And his cooking?" pursued Mrs. Crocker, thinking it best to keep the ball in motion.

"Betwane you an' me, ma'am, he lives without ating."

"Isn't he rather a strange man?" she continued, nothing daunted by this sweeping assertion.

"He's jist that, ma'am."

"I have a petition to which I wish to call his attention."

"A *parthition*, is it? And sure we doesn't need it, for the house is in fust-rate orther."

"Can I see him? I wish to show him this paper."

"He doesn't see anybody, ma'am—not a soul. I'm his duplercate, an' when he wants to see anybody, I sees 'em for him, an' that's the thruth. Ye can lave the paper, an' I'll examine it at me lashure," responded Tim, patronizingly.

Poor Mrs. Crocker felt baffled and chagrined. It was very evident that her errand would be a fruitless one, and she began to feel somewhat indignant at her reception.

"Is this the way you treat Mr. Harlow's visitors?" she said, in tones of sharp rebuke.

"It 's the way I thrates ladies, ma'am; but jintlemen I pitches out in the yard widout ceremony," replied Mr. Donigan.

"I shall inform Mr. Harlow of your impertinence!"

"Do it by all manes, the fust time ye spake wid him;" and so saying, Tim shut the door with a bang, and our discomfited gossip heard a bolt shot on the inside.

Thrusting the petition, which she had been to so much pains to indite, into her pocket, she hastened away with a flushed face, and walked to Mrs. Laning's to vent her pent-up wrath, where her surmises took a darker hue than ever. She threw out hints of a most startling character, which were exceedingly well received by her auditor, who, half an hour later, retailed them to Mrs. Jarvis, through whose agency they were widely disseminated and properly exaggerated; being made to take the positive form of truth, a thing which she well knew how to perform, having served a long apprenticeship at that business, much to the detriment and enjoyment of many well-disposed persons.

Mrs. Crocker returned home, but could think of nothing but the mystery which was wrapt about the Harlow mansion, and laid many hopeful plans for the elucidation of the same. She surmised that he was an escaped convict, and took some trouble to promulgate the idea; but sceptical persons required some proof, and she resolved to have it in her power to furnish any amount of evidence that might be demanded.

The following night she sent her son James to Mr. Harlow's house, with instructions to reconnoitre it on every side, and if necessary to scale the fence in the rear, and push his observations still further.

The first night failing to develop anything new, he went several nights in succession with the same praiseworthy motive in view. At length his reconnoissances appeared to be attended with some symptoms of success; for he came running home much out of breath, at about eight in the evening, averring "that there was something going on over there."

Mrs. Crocker caught her dutiful son by the arm, and eagerly asked "what he had seen;" to

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which he replied, "that he couldn't tell, but she had better go herself, and then she would know all about it."

The mother needed no urging on this point, but, hastily putting on her bonnet and shawl, started for the mysterious locality. Just before they reached the house, James jumped over the fence into the field, and then did what he could to assist his mother over, informing her that they must approach the building in the rear. The night was excessively dark, and the parties had literally to feel their way along.

"There's a spring here about two feet deep, mother; be careful and not get in," said the lad.

An energetic splashing admonished the boy that his warning had been given rather too late; his maternal parent had evidently found "the spring," although the discovery had not been attended with very pleasant consequences, having fallen into it in a manner to wet her thoroughly, and for which accident she threatened James with a severe flaggellation; but he excused himself on the ground that he had done the best he could, and the adventure was one of her own seeking.

Another mishap occurred in scaling the high fence behind the building. Not being very expert at climbing, nor remarkably agile in her movements, Mrs. Crocker's foot slipped just as she reached the top, and, falling forward, her skirt caught upon a projecting stick; and, being of an exceedingly stout fabric, held her suspended in a very awkward, not to say painful position.

The lad, having an acute sense of the ludicrous, could not help laughing in a very unbecoming manner at her ineffectual struggles to free herself; but, as it was imperatively necessary that he should make as little noise as possible, he was obliged to suppress his cachinnations by putting both hands over his mouth.

When he had somewhat exhausted his mirthfulness, he went to his mother's assistance; but, she being a heavy woman, he was not able to lift her in such a manner as to disengage her dress; consequently, he was obliged to resort to the ingenious expedient of cutting it loose with his knife.

Mrs. Crocker was not diverted from her purpose by these trifling misfortunes. What was a cold bath, or a fall from a five rail fence, in comparison with the high object of unmasking a mysterious villain, who wore his hat slouched over his eyes, and kept himself secluded from society?

A light glimmered from a window, and, advancing cautiously, she would fain have taken in the startling secrets of the Harlow house at a glance, had it not been for a curtain which covered nearly the whole window. Our heroine listened; she heard a fire hissing and crackling, a sound like the working of bellows, hammering, together with other ambiguous noises. Presently a voice said—

"Raise the window."

Falling back a few paces, she saw the order obeyed, while, at the same time, her olfactories were greeted with strong and almost suffocating vapors.

As soon as the gases had ceased to pour out so copiously, Mrs. Crocker returned to her former station, determined to use her eyes and ears to good advantage. Once or twice, when the wind blew up the curtain, she caught a glimpse of Harlow bending over a glowing crucible, stirring its contents with a rod, while Timothy Donigan stood at his side holding several small bottles containing powders of divers colors.

"It's a hape iv money I hope ye'll be afther makin', Misther Harlow, out iv this bizness," said the latter.

"I hope so too, Tim," responded Harlow.

"It's risk enough ye run intirely, with these dirthy powthers and gases. It's many a dollar I should want to pocket by the manes iv it."

The next view that she was favored with revealed Harlow pouring the molten fluid into a curious-looking vessel. A moment after she heard them hammering again, which demonstration was succeeded by more of the disagreeable fumes escaping from the open window.

Mrs. Crocker thought she had heard enough, nor did she deem it prudent to remain longer, for she was shivering with cold, her clothes having been thoroughly saturated; besides, one of her wrists pained her, on account of an injury which she had received in falling. But these discomforts were more than balanced by the important discoveries she had made.

The parties being so busily engaged, she perceived that she should incur no new risk by passing directly through the front yard, when she wended her way home, overwhelmed with the magnitude of what she had accomplished.

Her surmises she imagined she could now invest in the garb of certainty. She said nothing to her husband that night of what she had seen and heard—for he, good man, was sleeping soundly when she returned—and she laid awake until the small hours, calculating the most effectual method of springing her splendid discoveries upon the town of Woodvale.

For the first time since the mysterious Harlow

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had dared to do as he had done—slouching his hat over his eyes, and living so shamefully retired—she felt really happy. How she would surprise all the curious people! What commendable pride she should take in unfolding the scheme of villany, and showing what a woman can do!

In the morning, she cracked this new egg of scandal to her husband, enjoining it upon him to say nothing about it; but he, being rather stupid, could not at first comprehend her broad insinuations.

"I can't see what you're coming at," he said, when his spouse had fairly exhausted herself through the combined influences of wonder, hints, and exclamations.

"He 's a *counterfeiter!*" whispered Mrs. Crocker, condescending to be plain, because she pitied her husband's dulness.

"I don't believe it!" he returned, with unusual asperity; for, truth to tell, his wife generally had things her own way.

"That 's because you never look ahead," she retorted.

"This 'looking ahead and surmising' has never done you much good, wife, and I 've often thought it would be better for you to leave it off. It has occasioned a great deal of mischief, first and last, and I 've an idea that you 'll some time get into serious trouble by it."

With these words, Mr. Crocker arose from the breakfast-table and went to his work.

"What an unreasonable man! He never knows anything till it happens, and all because he never watches other people," soliloquized shrewd Mrs. Crocker.

Our gossip did not stop to attend to her domestic duties, but hurried to make Mrs. Laning the favored participant of her immense secret. A lad was dispatched for Mrs. Jarvis, and one or two other kindred minds, and the shocking revelation of the last twelve hours was looked at, turned over, and discussed from every point of view.

What was to be done? An enemy was in their midst—a *counterfeiter* was among them. The noble, the heroic Mrs. Crocker had discovered him plying his unlawful trade, and this, too, at the great personal inconvenience of tumbling into a spring, and falling from the top of a five-rail fence. She was certainly the Susannah of the village, and, to carry out the figure, the man who wore his hat slouched was the Holofernes. She deserved to be the standing toast of the neighborhood.

Such was the tone of the remarks made at that time, although Mrs. Laning secretly felt a little jealous of Mrs. Crocker's rising fame. It was now evident to these philanthropic ladies that immediate steps should be taken to bring the *coiner* to justice; but our heroine was not quite so strenuous on this point. To be sure, she had had ocular proof of Harlow's guilt, but didn't exactly wish to be the means of getting the misguided man convicted and sent to prison.

Mrs. Jarvis left them abruptly, without making known her purpose, which was to lay the whole matter before proper authorities. The magistrate whose duty it was to investigate such affairs, being a man of good sense, was greatly perplexed; but, the evidence being so direct, he was obliged to order the premises of Mr. Harlow to be searched.

That gentleman was unspeakably surprised when he saw a posse of men enter his yard; but, when they made known their object, he appeared much excited, although he did not for a moment cease to treat them with politeness.

"Gentlemen," he said, with forced calmness, "you are at liberty to search my house. May I ask who is my accuser?"

"I have sent for her, sir. I thought, in this case, that it might be well to have the accused and accuser face to face; besides, she can at once conduct us to the underground apartment, where she testifies she saw the process of coining going on. Here she is."

Mr. Harlow bowed, and cast an inquisitive glance at Mrs. Crocker, who entered, looking very pale and obviously startled.

"An' shure it 's the same pryin' body as brought the *parthition*," said Tim Donigan.

Mr. Harlow smiled, and fixed his gaze sharply upon Mrs. Crocker, who looked more like the culprit than any one present.

"This way, jintlemen," added Tim. "I 'll show ye where Misther Harlow an' meself makes a *hape* iv money."

The parties were shown into Harlow's laboratory, where they looked from one to another with the most inquiring expressions. The village doctor and apothecary having gone with the crowd (which always gets wind of such matters), at once recognized the uses and meaning of the various contrivances which they beheld, and began to realize that the fair accuser stood in no enviable position.

"This, gentlemen, you perceive, is my laboratory, where I have been engaged at times, since my residence among you, in making certain scientific experiments, which, I flatter myself, will yet be of service to the world. If there is a chemist or a physician here, he will unequivocally bear testimony to the character

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of this apartment, and the nature of these various implements."

Both the personages referred to assured all present that the character of the place could not be mistaken. It was one of the most amply provided and best arranged laboratories they had seen for years.

The constable darted angry looks at Mrs. Crocker, who was trembling with affright.

"This is the apartment you saw, I presume, madam, when you scaled the fence and looked in at the window?" said Harlow, sternly, addressing her.

She cowered into a corner, and faintly articulated "Yes."

"Mrs. Crocker, by your ill-timed curiosity and foolish meddling, you have laid yourself liable to an action for libel," added the officer of the law, angrily; for he felt that she had been the means of placing him in an awkward and ludicrous position.

"And I hope, for the good of this community, Mr. Harlow will commence a suit, and prosecute it to the extent of the law," remarked the doctor.

"I still remember the Maxwell case," said another; "but I trust, in this instance, that the author of so much mischief will not escape without punishment."

Terrified beyond measure, Mrs. Crocker fell to sobbing and shrieking, begging them not to take her to prison. She was conducted home in a pitiful plight, ready to sink into the earth with shame, and to go beside herself with fear.

In order to produce a deep and salutary effect, Mr. Harlow was advised to feign to make a serious matter of it, and appear fully determined to seek redress by a legal process; but her humiliation and terror were such that he soon ceased to torment her with the idea.

Mrs. Laning and Mrs. Jarvis did not go to the aid of their fallen leader, but asserted, with singular hardihood, "that they never believed a word about it; but told her, at the time, that Mr. Harlow was as *nice* a man as could be found in the town."

This base ingratitude — for such she considered it—was not without its effect upon Mrs. Crocker, and she resolved never to trust them with her "confidence" again.

Our gossip was subjected to various mortifications after this signal discomfiture. Not long after, the affair, treated in a very humorous manner, found its way into a country journal to which Mr. Crocker was a subscriber, which item served to fill up the cup of his wife's afflictions. Most of her neighbors "cut her acquaintance," and she learned, ultimately, that meddling with other people's affairs was not the best way to secure the respect of the community. Shunned by those whose friendship she most desired, Mrs. Crocker was thereafter obliged to retail her surmises in a very small way, and be careful whose characters she compromised by her unwarrantable inferences.

We need not stop to moralize upon this story. The sensible reader will be sure to do that for himself, and deprecate, in a becoming manner, the habit of surmising and propagating rumors which are as idle as the brains that give them origin.

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THE LADY DOCTOR.

CHAPTER I.

"FRED, have you heard that my old schoolfellow, Lucy Manners, is in town?"

"Yes, and I've heard something else; she intends to set up as a physician—a female doctor! What an insane idea!"

"Insane! I do not think so at all. I think that woman is best qualified as a physician for her own sex, and as for you men, you can physic yourselves."

"Many thanks to you for your kind allowance; by and by we poor fellows shall have no liberty at all."

"But really now, talking seriously, what *do* you think of woman as a physician?"

"What do I think? *I* think it is all humbug."

"Well, let me read you an article I saw several months ago in 'Godey's Book;'" and Mrs. Hanton got up and fetched the book.

"Now let 's hear; I 'll be bound it 's some nonsense or other."

"Judge after I have read it. It is headed: 'Woman the true Physician.' I will just read one or two paragraphs:—

"'Woman is well qualified by nature to be the sweetener of the joys, and the assuager of the sorrows of our race. The soft hand of a companion, a wife, a sister, or a daughter can more effectually adjust the pillow, administer the cordial, wipe off the cold dew of death, and close the extinguished eye than any other human being. In the chamber of sickness and distress, she is more persevering in her efforts, more true in her love to the last, and less easily disheartened than the other sex. For these things she is proverbial in the hour of trial. She never gives up till the last ray of hope vanishes.

"'Now, this property of her nature, which renders her the best of nurses, with proper instruction, equally qualifies her *to be the best of physicians.* All know, and every candid man must acknowledge, that a great portion of that reserve on the part of a female patient must be taken away, when the inquirer or attending physician is one of her own sex. Especially does every practising physician who has known the difficulty with which the symptoms of disease are elicited from a delicate, suffering female patient, understand the truth, nature, and philosophy of this declaration. Then, as to the condition of children, woman can better understand their symptoms and the condition of their health than a man can. In civilized life, who would expect a woman to use the sword, the plough, the axe, as dexterously as a man? Equally absurd is it to expect a man to understand all that is indicated by the cries and sobs, the laughs and scowls, and the various symptoms of disease in the child. The woman is ever with them, the man seldom. Nothing, however, is to be inferred from this statement to prove that a man physician cannot, by much more study than would be required by a woman, bring himself to know something about the diseases of children. But it *is* meant to be implied that women have much advantage over men in coming to the knowledge of the diseases of children. We wish to be understood that we advocate no *partial* medical education, but a thorough one, in all branches pertaining to the medical profession.'

"Now, what do you think of that?"

"I suppose it was some old woman that wrote it."

"It was not a woman at all; it was Dr. Cornell, a 'Professor of Physiology and Medical Jurisprudence.'"

"I wonder at any man writing such things."

"Well, it's time to retire; but I hope that, before the year is over, you will see proof of the truth of Dr. Cornell's declaration."

CHAPTER II.

LITTLE did Clara Hanton know that she was to be the first who proved the doctor's declaration. Frederick Hanton was the lawyer of the town in which he lived. With an extensive practice, an estate left him by his father, winning manners, and, above all, an agreeable exterior, he was for some time a mark for all the young ladies in the town. But Fred Hanton, in looking out for a wife, saw none so fit to be his partner as Clara Justin. She was not *pretty*, but there was a grace about her which charmed all who knew her. Two years before the opening of our story, Fred had led Clara to the hymeneal altar.

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The day after the conversation related in the preceding chapter took place, Clara had a visit from Lucy Manners, or "Miss Doctor Manners."

"Oh, Lucy, how glad I am to see you! How are you?"

"I am quite well," said Lucy; "how long it is since I saw you!"

"Yes, indeed. I have not heard of you since we left school. Where have you been?"

"Oh!" said Lucy, "I have been studying at the medical college."

"Have you?" said Clara, laughing; "and how did the young men treat you?"

"Very politely, I assure you. But it is really a shameful thing that there is no Female Medical College, where we could go without being insulted."

"It is, indeed; but Fred and I were talking about you only last night."

"Of *me?*"

"Yes, of *you*, and female practitioners in general; and I can tell you Fred bears them no good-will."

"I am sorry to hear that; but it is such a new idea, that people will pay no attention to it until they see its utility, and they will soon see that."

"I hope they will. Come, take off your bonnet and stay to tea."

Lucy consented, and the two friends spent a very happy afternoon. At tea, Fred was introduced to Miss Manners, and she was so intelligent in her conversation that he was quite charmed with her. After tea she left, to attend a patient at the other end of the town. After she was gone, Fred expressed his admiration of her in no measured terms.

"But," said he, "what a pity that she is so infatuated. She is good as a woman, if not a physician."

A few days after this, in returning from a *soirée*, Clara caught cold. Notwithstanding this, she went out for a drive the next day, and whilst returning, a storm of rain came on, and before she reached home she was wet through. That night a burning fever set in, and Clara was rolling and tossing on a sick couch. She begged Fred to send for Lucy, but he would not do so. Dr. Garrett was called in. He was a middle-aged man, and was celebrated for his medical skill; but he was exceedingly rough, and did not know how to draw replies from his patients kindly and in an agreeable manner. From the extent of his practice, he was obliged to devote only a small time to each patient, and though he attended Clara, and prescribed for her, he had no time to regulate the temperature of the room, to give directions how, and what was the best way to administer medicine. Poor Clara was always in a fever of anxiety whenever he entered the room, and as quietness and composedness were most necessary, his *actual presence* seldom did her any good. On account of the high excitement under which she labored, the least thing was sufficient to increase her fever. She grew worse, and two nights afterwards was delirious. Fred always attended her, stayed wholly away from his business, and was by her bedside day and night. Every want, as he thought, was anticipated; but he was much mistaken. The gentle hand of a woman was wanting; the hand to adjust the pillow, administer the medicines as tenderly as possible; there was wanting the noiseless step and breathless silence. No! man was *not* made for the sick room! It is woman's sphere, and there she has a *right* to be. Who that has been ill, and attended by a gentle sister, a confiding mother, an attentive wife, or even a good nurse, has not felt easier in her presence than in that of a father, a brother, a husband, or a doctor?

CHAPTER III.

Frequently had Clara begged her husband to send for Lucy Manners, and place her wholly under the female doctor's directions.

"No, no!" Frederick Hanton would say; "if you were to die under her treatment, I should never forgive myself."

But when he saw "his Clara" getting worse; when he noticed the delirious gleam of her eye, the burning cheek, he thought he was going to lose her.

"This doctor seems to do her no good," said he to himself, "and Lucy can do her no harm, now that she is out of the reach of human aid. I'll send for Lucy."

Well was it for him that he did so immediately, for soon it would have been too late.

When Lucy came, he put everything into her hands, telling her to do whatever she thought proper. The first thing she did was to dismiss the officious sick-nurse that Dr. Garrett had recommended Fred to procure. She then had Mrs. Hanton removed on a settee to another room, which had been warmed for the purpose, so tenderly and quietly, that she did not wake even. In the mean time, the bed was changed and the apartment well aired; for, on entering, Lucy had been almost suffocated by the closeness and heat. This she knew was not the thing for a feverish

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patient. When the room was heated moderately, Mrs. Hanton was again removed; and Fred was delighted at the slight change for the better which even this salutary precaution had produced. After doing this and other little things which Dr. Garrett would have thought infinitely below him, Lucy prescribed a cooling medicine, and took her departure. She left Clara in a deep sleep, and charged Frederick not to allow her to be awakened, as her life depended on it. She promised to return in an hour, but she had another patient to visit. While she was away, Dr. Garrett called, and as Mr. Hanton had told the servants to allow no one to enter, he was refused admittance. Fred heard the altercation in the hall, and immediately went down to explain.

"You impudent scoundrel," said the doctor to the footman, "how dare you refuse me admittance? I'll—"

But here Mr. Hanton appeared on the scene, and the doctor, turning to him in some excitement, said—

"I must request you to dismiss this cur. He had the impertinence to say he had your orders for not allowing me to enter."

"It was by my order, Dr. Garrett; my wife's now attended by Miss Lucy Manners, who has recently arrived in town, and who has given directions that on no account is Mrs. Hanton to be disturbed."

"Give your wife to the care of a female doctor!—a quack!—a cheat!"

"Dr. Garrett," said Frederick, unable to restrain himself, "I will not hear my wife's friend insulted in my presence, or in my house. John, (turning to the footman), show this gentleman the door." And he turned on his heel and went up to his wife's chamber, fearful lest the noise had awakened her. Happily, she was still sleeping.

When she awoke, Clara was so much better that Fred's hopes revived, and he prayed that she might recover. Thanks to Lucy, she did recover.

* * * * * * * *

Clara was now able to come down stairs and sit in the easy-chair by the fire. One night Lucy Manners, Clara, and her husband were sitting cosily by the fire after tea. Fred looked lovingly on his wife, raised as it were from the grave, and thoughts of thankfulness to God for sending Lucy Manners to the town arose. The same subject had come up with which we began our tale.

"Do you think *now* that the female doctors are humbugs?" said Clara.

"No, indeed; I shall do all I can to further their good efforts, and the only way to do that is to employ them. I have paid dearly for my infidelity, and never more will Fred Hanton forget who, by God's help, restored his wife to him;" and he leaned over and kissed Clara.

"Fred, for shame. Don't you see how Lucy's laughing at you?" said she, trying to look very demure and unlaughable.

"Oh! Mr. Hanton, I beg you not to regard my presence as a balk to your enjoyment."

Fred, on this leave, stole another kiss.

* * * * * * * *

CHAPTER IV.

About a year after Clara Hanton's illness, an event occurred which shook the little town of T——ville to its very centre. For some days Dr. Garrett's house had been in a state of great uproar. Carpenters, glaziers, and painters, upholsterers, and what not, had been seen going to the rich bachelor's house; indeed, there were some ready to affirm that they had seen a milliner slyly entering by the back door. These proceedings astonished the natives exceedingly, and still more were they astonished at hearing that the bachelor-like, staid, prime-looking Dr. Garrett had actually gone to the only jeweller in the place, and purchased a necklace of pearls and other jewelry.

"Wal, I declar', if that ain't signs o' the times, I doesn't know what is," said Mrs. Peabody to Mrs. Crinkle, who had just told her the above.

"It do look queerish-like, but I think he 's going to be married."

But people talked and talked, all to no purpose; until one day the following appeared in the public paper:—

"*Married*, on Tuesday, the 18th, Dr. Garrett of this town, to Miss Dr. Lucy Manners, who has been practising here with great success."

Editor's Remarks.—"It has been whispered, we know not with what degree of truth, that the cause of the doctor's marriage is that the *doctoress* has of late increased her practice so, the doctor found himself entirely eclipsed. We may now venture to say that we have the best corps of doctors in the State, and can boast of what no other town possesses; namely, its doctors united."

A few days after the marriage, the December number of "Godey" came in. Dr. and Mrs. Garrett were spending the evening at Mr. Hanton's when it arrived, and in looking over it

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closely, Clara discovered the following paragraph:—

"*Female Medical Education* is steadily progressing in our land. Two regular Medical Colleges for women, viz., one at Boston and one at Philadelphia, are now in session, and several male colleges receive female students in separate classes. We do not know the exact number of these students; probably about one hundred in all are now in attendance on medical lectures, with the intention of becoming physicians of their own sex and children. Who will not wish them God speed?"

"I will," interrupted Dr. Garrett, "I will, with all my heart, especially if all the students are as sweet as Lucy;" and then he added, musingly, "I wonder if they wear caps and gowns."

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THE MATCH-MAKING MOTHER.
A E M
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Oct 1854; 49, American Periodicals
pg. 325

THE MATCH-MAKING MOTHER.

BY A. E. M.

THERE are different grades of match-makers. The first we shall notice would think it doing them great injustice to hint that they belong to this denomination; and it matters not how unhappy their daughters are made by uncongenial marriages, they never dream that they are blamable.

The daughter is brought out before she is capable of guarding her heart against the danger of loving unworthily, and, ere the parents are aware, she is engaged. If there is wealth or distinguished ancestry, or both, on the lover's side, no objection is made, and the tender plant, that should have been carefully nurtured for several years, is given up to assume responsibilities that her young imagination never dreamed of; responsibilities that, five years hence, she should enter upon with fear and trembling. Scarcely a thought is given whether or not this man will render her happy; she has, as the world says, done well; this is sufficient. A few years prove it to be an unhappy union. Who is to blame?

Another class, though not so numerous as the first, possess all the faults, and many more. The daughter is trained that the ultimate end of every accomplishment is to please the opposite sex. To win for herself a handsome settlement, is the lesson. She is taught all the feminine arts that woman is capable of teaching and learning, and every thought is concentrated in this all-important event, every act done with an eye single to its advancement. It matters not how the poor fellow is secured, so he is safely bound with the hymeneal halter. While there are many other causes for broken hearts and blighted hopes, a careful observation tells us that the chief cause is maternal influence. Do not start, mother! Look around you, and say, are we too severe? How many interesting girls can you call to mind, capable of filling the highest provinces of woman, ruined by a wrong education! Woman, as a mother, has never been fully aroused to her duty. To her are committed the daughters of our land, and she is responsible for their safety. As she educates them, they will educate another generation. Then how important that she should train them to piety and usefulness, with a higher, a holier motive than that of securing wealthy husbands? In fact, they should not be taught to secure them at all. If at a proper age their happiness will be advanced by marriage with worthy men, then, with prayers for their safety, let them marry. But do not teach that there is no other sphere in which woman can be happy and useful than that of the wife and mother. Fit them for any station of life, and in any station they will find a mission to execute, and a field for its execution.

Perhaps no one ever professed greater qualifications for match-making than did Mrs. Osgood. She was not a weak-minded woman, like many of this class; therefore, she was better calculated to accomplish her purpose. She knew how to deal with the refined and unrefined, having too much sense to go so far as to disgust the former, and just enough to lead the latter at will. She was an ambitious, proud, and self-willed woman. The establishment of her six daughters had been her constant study ever since Jane, the eldest, had approached womanhood.

Mr. Osgood had suffered his wife to hold the sceptre until he dared not reach forth his hand to take it. He had never seen his error fully until Jane grew up, and he was informed by the mother that she was engaged, without ever asking his approval, to a man utterly unworthy the notice of a woman of refinement. Yet he was immensely wealthy, and with Mrs. Osgood every other consideration sank into insignificance. Jane did not love this man; she had only passively yielded to her mother's wishes. She was timid, and could not summon courage to speak to her father on such a subject.

A few days after his wife had informed him of the engagement, Mr. Osgood received a visit at his office from Mr. Howard, soliciting the hand of his daughter. He was decidedly refused. This enraged Howard's impetuous temper, and he determined to marry her at all events. Mrs. Osgood scolded and persuaded, but all to no effect. To her surprise, her husband was not to be moved. He was fully aroused to his duty in this case, and with what seemed almost unnatural firmness, opposed the union. He used every argument in his power to convince his wife of the unworthiness of Howard, yet she persisted.

Mr. Osgood knew that nothing he could say

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would have any effect, and resolved to act. So he bade Jane be ready to start by the next stage to S——, a well-known female institution. Mrs. Osgood was, for once, thwarted, yet she determined not to yield, though it took years to accomplish her design.

Magdalene, the second daughter, possessed her mother's firmness, but her father's kind heart. She had ever been a favorite child, and though but eighteen, Mr. Osgood was not displeased when, in confidence, she told him her love for Dr. Williamson, and asked his advice in regard to so early an engagement. He did not approve of early marriages, yet in this case he hesitated not to give his consent. He knew Dr. Williamson to be a man of true worth. Feeling, too, that his own health was rapidly declining from a consumption that had long preyed on his system, he was pleased at the prospect of seeing his daughter united to such a man before his death.

Six months after Jane's departure to school, she was permitted to come home to her sister's wedding, on condition that she should return immediately after. Mr. Osgood was too much indisposed to go with her back to school directly after this event, so it was postponed another week. During this time he had frequent conversations with his daughter, in which she confessed her indifference to Mr. Howard, promising not to marry him. The next week he grew rapidly worse, and nothing more was said of her leaving. In one more week his death put an end to her school-days. Mr. Howard returned, renewed his suit, and Jane was persuaded, or rather forced, to marry him.

Virginia and Laura were married as soon as they were old enough. Thus, in four years after Mr. Osgood's death, three of his daughters were married. Jane to one utterly void of principle; Virginia to a man of fifty; and Laura to a confirmed drunkard, all to satisfy a mother's ambition for wealth.

Eleanor and Emma were the last; one twelve, the other fourteen, at the time of introducing them to our readers. Eleanor was her mother's idol. Handsome and intelligent, Mrs. Osgood saw plainly that she was to do honor to herself and family; that she was destined for a great man. In short, she was all that her mother could wish, and on her she concentrated her whole heart. It is not strange that, under such influence, she should soon become a spoiled beauty. Her vanity and pride at this early age could only be equalled by her mother's. Poverty in her eyes was only allied to ignorance and vice; wealth to everything that was desirable.

Fortunately for Emma, she was not a beauty, but plain, very plain; yet she had a heart of priceless value. Mrs. Osgood thought her far inferior to Eleanor in every respect. Her treatment towards them had rendered Emma timid and awkward, and she had been so often told that she would "*never be anybody*," that she was perfectly satisfied not to be. To a superficial observer, she appeared to be an ordinary child; but to one who can read well the human heart, there was much to win admiration.

One day, about this time, these little girls were called up and addressed thus: "My daughters, your aunt J—— has just written to me that I may expect her next week, and that she intends spending some time with us. Now do try to appear well. She is wealthy, the wife of a distinguished man, and I shall be deeply mortified if you do not behave very genteelly. Emma, do try, for once, to lay aside your awkward ways. Be careful not to soil your clothes, or neglect your hair. You are now twelve years old; it is time you were trying to become what I so much desire, an accomplished young lady. Will you promise to do your best?"

"Yes, ma, my very best," said the gentle girl, with tears in her eyes.

Mrs. J—— arrived; the little girls were in ecstasies. They had never before seen their aunt or little cousin, Louisa, of whom Mrs. J—— so often spoke in her letters to Mrs. Osgood, who was a sweet girl about Emma's age. They soon became acquainted, and all went well, even with Emma, for several days. She had never spent so long in her life without receiving a reproof, unless when staying with her sisters, Magdalene and Jane; they and Dr. Williamson being the only persons who seemed to have any interest in her. Oh, how her little heart beat with joy to think she had been so long without receiving even an angry look! "I will be like sis Elly," said she; "then ma will love me too."

Poor child! her fond anticipations were not to be realized so soon. The little girls were neatly dressed and had taken a walk, when they overtook little Jane Jones, with a large basket of turnips, almost sinking under their weight, crying bitterly. Jane was an orphan, whom Emma had ever loved and pitied. She had been taken when very young by Mrs. Green, a hard-hearted woman, with no higher motive than her own selfish views. To use her own words: "To take the drudgery off of my hands when she gets big enough." And it was not long before Mrs. Green thought her large enough to do a great deal.

"Why, Jane, where are you going with such a load? What makes you carry so many?" said Emma, in tones of sympathy.

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"Mrs. Green said she would whip me well if I did not bring the basket full. I am nearly dead; I wish I were. Then I could rest!"

Emma flew to her, and taking one side of the basket, assisted her to carry it to Mrs. Green's gate. The consequence was that her apron was soiled, and her nice pink dress suffered greatly from the flowing sleeve coming in contact with the unwashed turnips.

Eleanor was indignant.

"You are a nice sight," said she; "what will ma say to you?"

Emma burst into tears.

"Don't cry, cousin; aunt will not be angry when she knows all," said Louisa.

Emma knew her mother too well to believe that.

The mothers were sitting in the porch awaiting their return. As soon as they came in, Mrs. Osgood, in a tone of surprise, exclaimed—

"Emma, what is the matter? Where did you get all that dirt on your dress and apron?"

Eleanor, without waiting for Emma to speak, commenced—

"Ma, only think, after all you have said to her about noticing that Jane Jones, she overtook her and assisted her to carry a basket of dirty turnips full half a mile."

"Is it possible?" said the mother.

Here Emma again commenced crying.

"Oh, aunt, cousin did right; don't be angry," said Louisa. And the sweet little girl, with artless simplicity, related the incident.

"She is a noble girl, my sister, and deserves your highest commendation," said Mrs. J——.

Eleanor now blushed with shame for her forwardness. It was the first time she had ever heard her sister praised for anything. Then there was something in her aunt's tone that seemed to reprove *her*.

Mrs. J—— had long wished for a companion for Louisa, but feared to take one, so careful lest she might get one whose disposition might not have a salutary effect on her own daughter. Every day something occurred to strengthen her attachment to Emma, and confirm her in the opinion that she was treated with injustice. After writing, and obtaining the consent of Judge J——, Mrs. J—— informed her sister of a plan in view of adopting Emma, provided she was willing.

Mrs. Osgood gladly assented. She knew it would enhance the pecuniary interest of both, for this was all she desired. By getting Emma off, she thought she could spend her all on Eleanor, for her limited income would not permit her to educate and dress both as she desired, and still keep up her expensive style of living. Thus the sisters were parted.

We pass over the next several years. Eleanor grew up, and was the belle wherever she went. Her beauty and vivacity attracted many admirers, but not lovers. It was easy to see through the flimsy veil that covered her design. She was a heartless coquette, who encouraged all, with the view of at last accepting the one that offered the most flattering prospect of that affluence that she and her mother so much desired.

At eighteen, Emma Osgood, though much improved, was not yet a beauty. Under the fostering hand of Mrs. J——, and having the advantage of the best instructors in the country, her noble qualities were fully developed, her mind well stored with useful knowledge, while the ornamental was not neglected. This is not all, nor half, for she had sought and found the "pearl of great price." She was truly pious. Her sensitive heart had not been wounded by an angry word since she became an inmate of Judge J——'s happy home. If she desired to assist an unfortunate one, she had encouragement to act. Jane Jones was taken by Mrs. J—— soon after the incident related in another part of our story, and has ever since found a pleasant home in this excellent family as seamstress.

Judge J—— loved Emma almost equal to Louisa, and amply was he repaid for his love by the affectionate goodness of his niece. She and Louisa were everything to each other. They had no secrets apart, and never were two girls more deserving of each other's confidence. Mrs. J—— had been in delicate health for some time, but no one thought her dangerous until the winter, when she declined so rapidly that the family became seriously alarmed. Louisa was engaged; the time set apart for the wedding was in December. All were anxious to postpone the marriage until spring, thinking Mrs. J——'s health would improve; but she urged them not to do so. As it was intended by Judge J—— that his only child should remain with them as long as they lived, there was no real necessity for a postponement, and they were married.

Mrs. Osgood and Eleanor came to the wedding, and stayed several weeks after. The mother was not a little flattered at the sensation her daughters created. Eleanor had now a prospect of realizing her most sanguine expectations in regard to wealth, and Emma's society was much courted by a man whom, above all others, Mrs. Osgood would prefer for her son-in-law. To have a daughter married to a son of the most

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distinguished man in the State, and wealth in abundance, what more could she desire?

She had never heard her sister mention this young man in connection with Emma, and was extremely anxious to know her opinion.

"Governor ———'s son seems to be attached to Emma," said she to her sister, the day before she left. "Do you think the attachment is reciprocated?"

"I do not. Emma has already rejected him once, but he seems disposed to renew his suit."

"Rejected him!" said Mrs. Osgood, with surprise. "And why? She certainly does not expect to do *better*."

"Perhaps I do not understand what you mean by doing better," said Mrs. J——.

"I mean he is handsome, intelligent, wealthy, and the son of the first man in the State. What more could she desire?"

"These are desirable prerequisites; but my niece requires more, at the risk of losing these. Are not moral qualifications of some weight? And suppose she does not love him, must she not consult her own heart in regard to this important matter? No, my sister, Emma will *never* marry Edward ———. Her pure nature would shrink from such a union. If the world judge not too severely, he is not all that he should be. His father was a man of true worth, and my husband's early friend; for his sake alone his son is treated with respect in our house. But not even this will have the least weight in a matter of such vital importance."

Mrs. Osgood saw that prudence forbade her saying more; yet she had said enough to show that her old propensity for match-making was fully aroused.

This conversation had a serious impression on Mrs. J——. She knew she could not live long, and she shuddered to think of the consequences if Emma should be placed under her mother's influence at this time.

Before leaving, Mrs. Osgood drew Emma into a conversation on the subject, and was still more surprised and chagrined when told that she was already engaged to another, and that her aunt and uncle approved her choice. Mrs. Osgood was greatly perplexed, yet had too much discretion, if we may give it the name, to act hastily. Being informed by Emma that she had never intended marrying without consulting her, and not at all until she was twenty, she saw that there was sufficient time for thought, and wisely determined to say but little.

Henry Sherrard was the son of the pastor of the church to which Judge J——'s family belonged; he resided in the same village, consequently a close intimacy subsisted between the two families. Mr. Sherrard was a man of exemplary piety, highly educated, and eminently qualified to train his son not only as a Christian, but to move in the highest sphere of life. Henry had been nursed in the lap of refinement. His mother possessed rare endowments, and had used them successfully in the education of her only son. He had chosen teaching as his avocation, and promised to stand among the first in his profession. Already his high morality and deep-toned piety had won for him the admiration and love of all who knew him; while his discipline and capacity for imparting knowledge would have done credit to one double his years.

Henry and Emma had loved each other from their first acquaintance. Two beings could not be more admirably suited for each other.

Four months from Louisa's marriage, Judge J—— was taken suddenly ill, and in two short days closed his eyes to this world. None who knew him doubted his acceptance with his Maker. Few men lived a better life, few died a happier death. Like a wise man, he was ready to live or die, as his Master willed.

Emma was amply endowed. Better perhaps for her had she been forgotten in her uncle's will; but we will not anticipate.

Mrs. J—— bore her sorrow as a Christian should every dispensation of Providence, yet the shock was too great for her debilitated system. A few more weeks, and the family were summoned to her bedside to receive her parting blessing. To each one she delivered an affectionate, though short address. To Emma she said—

"But for you, my niece, all would be well. Louisa has a kind husband; for her I have no fears as regards her temporal happiness, and I hope I need have none for her eternal. Your sister Eleanor will soon marry and leave home. It will then be your duty to go to your mother. If Edward ——— should strive to renew his attentions to you, I fear the result. "Obey your parents," is a Divine command; but God does not require obedience to an earthly parent when by it you must sacrifice your duty to Him. Look at your sisters, and take warning. Never, like them, be persuaded into a situation that promises nothing but misery. I look upon it as one of the greatest sins of which woman can be guilty, to take upon herself the solemn vow that she is required to take at the altar, "to love, honor, and obey" a man for whom she has not even a feeling of regard. There is no situation in which she could be placed that would justify such a thing in the sight of God. I hope

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you may not be subjected to the trials I allude to; yet I cannot help fearing."

The next day she tranquilly breathed her last. Not a cloud darkened her way. All was calm and serene. To picture this distressed family would require a more graphic pen than the humble writer of this story can command. Earnestly did Emma and Louisa pray for strength to follow the advice, and wisdom to imitate the example, of one whose life had been a sermon.

Perhaps no one, except Louisa and Emma, felt the loss more deeply than did Henry Sherrard; much of his success in life he owed to Judge J——, and much happiness to his inestimable wife. He heard with deep regret that Emma would soon leave. He knew he could not visit her often, owing to his professional duties. This was all that caused his sorrow, for he dreamed not of the trials that awaited them. Emma knew her mother's disposition, and had but little hope of gaining her consent, yet she resolved not to trouble him with her gloomy apprehensions while there was any hope.

As we are not writing a love-story, we will not recapitulate the scene at their parting. Eleanor was married, and shortly after accompanied her husband to his home in Louisiana. But a few months after Emma's arrival home, Edward visited her. Does our reader suppose that love prompted him? Edward ——— was not capable of loving. His heart was too much filled with his idol, self, to admit another occupant. He knew from the first that Judge J—— was wealthy, and intended making Emma equal in fortune to his own child. This alone prompted him. His father died when he was young, and left him in the possession of a handsome estate; but, so soon as it came into his possession, he wasted it greatly by gambling. The world still believed him wealthy; none but a few intimate friends, his indorsers, knew that his property was worth but few thousands more than would pay his debts. This accounts for his *love*, if it does not desecrate the name.

As soon as he left, after his first visit, Mrs. Osgood commenced—

"Well, Emma, have you rejected Edward again?"

"Yes, ma, and I hope for the last time. I am fully determined to listen to him no more. I have told him to-day that I can never love him, and he *must* not mention the subject to me again."

"Have you no regard to my wishes? I have repeatedly told you how much I desire to see you the wife of Governor ———'s son. There is no girl in the State but would feel honored to be united to that family. Again, he is wealthy, handsome, and one of the most intelligent young men I ever saw."

Emma made no reply, and Mrs. Osgood continued—

"Were your dear father alive, it would receive his warmest approval."

"Not unless it was agreeable to me, ma. Pa could not wish me to marry a man I do not even esteem," said she, earnestly.

"It is all foolishness for you to act thus," said Mrs. Osgood, not heeding her reply. "You cannot expect to remain single always. My health is feeble, and I wish to see you married before I die. This is the only eligible offer you have ever had, and I must insist that you accept it."

"Ma, I cannot. It is useless to urge it any further. Besides, he will not return again, after all I said to him. Surely, he would not accept the hand, when he has been told the heart is not his."

"The heart is not his!" repeated Mrs. Osgood, with bitter irony. "I suppose you have given that to Henry Sherrard; but, rest assured, you shall never marry him if I can prevent it! Neither shall he ever visit my house."

"I never will marry him without your consent; and, if you desire it, I will write to him to-night, and tell him all; but never, never can I marry another!"

Mrs. Osgood was surprised at Emma's calmness. She expected tears; but she forgot that Emma had been preparing for this for several months. She had not said before that she should *never* marry Henry; now she had, Emma deemed it her duty to tell him all, particularly as she had said he should not visit her, and his vacation was near at hand. A short paragraph from her letter to him will show her feelings: "Yes, Henry, our long-cherished hopes must be abandoned. I cannot, neither do I believe you would desire it—marry you when my mother has positively forbidden it. Should I ever gain her consent, you shall know it immediately; if I never do, rest assured, *my first, my only love*, I shall ever remain Emma Osgood!"

Henry was wounded deeply, yet he was a Christian, and knew that Emma was right. Except that a shade of seriousness was on his countenance, none would have guessed that anything had occurred. He loved her better for her self-sacrificing spirit, and, in reply, wrote her a long letter, in which he promised to wait patiently. "Perhaps," wrote he, "my Emma,

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we need this trial. Let us, then, bear it, hoping a happier day will dawn ere long."

Edward intended to return, yet he rather feared to do so. He therefore wrote to Emma, expressing his love in the most eloquent language, entreating to see her once more, closing by telling her he should be there on a certain day not far distant, unless she forbade it. Emma had taken a walk when the letters arrived. Mrs. Osgood knew by the postmark that one was from Edward ——— or Henry Sherrard; fearing the latter, and wishing to break up the correspondence, she intercepted the letter. Finding it from the former, she thought it best to say nothing about it, but let him come, trusting to her own judgment to arrange matters before his arrival. A short time after, Emma came in, and Mrs. Osgood commenced—

"Emma, if Edward ——— should return, are you still determined to persist in disobeying me? Are you determined not to marry him?"

"Ma, you have my answer. I had hoped the matter was settled, and that we should never again have our feelings wounded by another conversation on the subject. If he has the least delicacy or refinement, he will never enter this house again."

"You are mistaken; he will be here next Thursday, and I wish you to make up your mind to answer him according to my wishes."

"Next Thursday!" said Emma, in astonishment. "How did you"——

"It matters not; he will be here. Will you do as I desire? Will you promise me, at least, to treat him politely, and postpone giving him another answer yet a while?"

"That would encourage a false hope."

"Emma, listen to me; you are my child, I have a right to expect obedience, and I now require it. You must marry Edward ———, and hear my reasons. I am in debt; if my matters were arranged, all, all would have to go to satisfy my creditors. Edward has promised that I shall not be disturbed about these things, if he marries my daughter. Will you see your mother's home and everything taken from her now when age is coming on?"

"Never! never! My uncle has left me enough—more than enough; you shall have all."

"Listen to me, I say. The whole property, at the death of your father, was valued at $50,000. One-third of this was mine during my lifetime, and can only be sold during my life. I owe $5,000. This is more than I could get for it in this way, were I to sell it. As for yours, your uncle left it in the hands of a guardian until you are twenty-five, unless you marry. So you can only draw your annual allowance."

"If these are your reasons, ma, I will marry Henry Sherrard, if you will agree to it. I will tell him all, and"——

"Not another word! I have said it, and it shall *never* be! Never call his name to me again."

"Then I can do no more. I will never marry another."

"*You will not?* You have said it at last. As you please, then. I have borne much; I cannot bear much more. The day you discard Edward ——— again, you will be an orphan. I cannot, I *will* not live to witness such ingratitude!"

"My mother, dearest mother, how are you talking? You will not live? What do you mean? You are excited. Let us say no more about this matter until you are more calm."

"Calm! calm! I was never more calm in my life, and again repeat"——

"Oh, do not, do not repeat! You know not what you are saying."

"I do repeat, I will not live to know myself a beggar, when my child could have prevented it."

"I can, and will prevent it. I will go to Dr. Williamson. He will arrange it. I can pay all in five years, if you will not allow me sooner."

"You shall not go to any one. You know my determination, decide for yourself. Life has but few charms for me. I would as soon die as live; and, when I am gone, remember you have been my murderer."

"Oh, God, spare me! Oh, my mother, pity me! On my knees let me beg for mercy! Oh, take back those awful words! I will"——

"Will do what?" was the quick reply.

"Anything but marry that man. Oh, do not urge it! Look at my poor sisters. Laura, you thought, married well; but how sadly disappointed have you been. But a few weeks ago, her husband ordered you to leave his house, and tauntingly accused you of marrying your child to him through mercenary motives."

"He never would have done this had he not been under the influence of wine."

"And did you not tell me, ma, that you knew of his intemperate habits before his marriage with my sister?"

"That has nothing to do with the present conversation," said Mrs. Osgood, abruptly. "This fault you cannot allege of Edward."

"Neither can it be alleged of Virginia's husband; and is she happy? There is my sweet sister Jane; well do I remember when on her knees she intreated you, in the name of our

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departed parent, not to urge her to marry a man whom she had promised that parent to cease to notice. Yet you urged, and what a life she leads with a husband who deserves not the name of man. Oh, mother, spare me, I beg you! Let my sisters warn you to save me."

"Ungrateful child! and do you make *me* the author of all your sisters' misfortunes?"

"I am not ungrateful, dearest mother, but I cannot marry that man."

Mrs. Osgood was determined to hear no more, and abruptly left the room, leaving Emma in despair.

"What shall I do? Oh, my father! my uncle! my aunt! would that I were in heaven with you! My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Here she fell again on her knees, and never in all her life had she prayed a more fervent prayer. Yet she was not comforted, all was dark and gloomy.

Mrs. Osgood was not so utterly void of feeling as not to pity her child; but her better feelings were too weak to overcome her inordinate desire for fame. She was determined to carry her point, if she sacrificed everything to its accomplishment. Since she had become composed, she saw the impropriety of her conduct. She thought she was calm, but she had mistaken the intense excitement, that made every nerve motionless, for calmness. Her rash words were now bitterly repented, yet she was not the less determined to persevere.

It was Monday; Jane Howard sent over early requesting Emma to spend the day with her, as Mr. Howard expected to be from home all day. Mrs. Osgood made no objections, and Emma was soon seated by her sister, and little Lucy, Jane's only child, fondling on her. During the day, she unburdened her sorrows to this sister.

"I cannot tell you," said Jane, sorrowfully, "how to act. I dare not advise you to marry him. My own sorrows forbid it. For nine years I have known nothing but misery, *misery*, that I have never divulged even to our mother. Misery rendered fourfold worse by knowing it has been dealt by a hand that I never loved. I will not pain you with a recital of my troubles, you have enough. But for my little girl, gladly would I go to rest. She needs my care; for her sake, I can suffer on. Nothing else on earth could induce me to continue the slave of Louis Howard. Long since I should have left him, though to seek an asylum among the poorest and humblest on earth. I could bear his cruel temper, but——Oh, Emma, I cannot, I will not tell you all."

Mr. Howard returned early. Jane knew that her swollen eyes would betray her. Naturally suspicious, he was fully persuaded, as soon as he saw her, that she had related a scene enacted that morning that he was particularly anxious should not be known. At Jane's earnest solicitations, Emma sent her little niece and a servant to her mother, to inform her that she would not be at home until early in the morning, but that she, little Lucy, would remain with her that night. After all had retired to their rooms, Mr. Howard said to his wife, in a sarcastic tone—

"I hope you have spent a pleasant day in relating your grievances."

Jane was silent, and he continued—

"Have I and my faults afforded you a topic? I repeat, have I been the subject of remark? If so, you shall rue it. Speak! I demand an answer."

"You have," was the faint reply.

Without a moment's reflection, his impetuous temper giving strength to his arm, he dealt a heavy blow upon the head of his delicate wife, which threw her against the grate and inflicted a deep wound on the side of her head. One loud shriek, and she fainted. Emma, alarmed, flew to her sister's chamber. Oh, what a sight! The blood flowed freely from the wound, and she lay as one dead. The angry husband sat quietly looking on his work, without power to move. He looked the very picture of despair. As Emma entered, he gazed wildly at her, as one roused from a dream, and exclaimed—

"I have done it at last! O God, forgive me!"

"What have you done?" was all Emma could say. The servants, having been alarmed also, were flocking in. Emma tried to compose herself, and, with their assistance, laid her on a bed, and did all their skill could suggest to restore her. Dr. Williamson and her mother were sent for in haste.

While all this was going on, Mr. Howard sat motionless. "I have done it at last! O God, forgive me!" were the only words he had uttered since he struck the fatal blow. Dr. Williamson soon came in. Knowing the character of Howard, and having heard of his cruel treatment to his wife, at a glance he saw into the cause of this scene. He was a man of forethought, and never acted without reflection. The first thing he did he pointed to the door, signifying to the servants to leave. They did so with heavy hearts, for they loved their mistress affectionately. They believed she had fallen and hurt herself in some way, but did not think of Mr. Howard's guilt, knowing Emma to be there, and that he was always remarkably kind to his wife

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in company. While examining the wound, the unfortunate woman roused up, and faintly said, "Emma! mother!" At this moment Mrs. Osgood walked in. Dr. Williamson motioned her to be silent. "Mother," said she again, "oh, that I could see you once more!"

"My child, I am here," said the unhappy mother.

"I am dying, mother, come nearer. I am willing to go; but promise me"——

"I promise anything, my child, that you ask."

"Then I ask you, as a last and dying request, not to urge Emma to marry Edward ———."

"It shall be as you desire. And oh, dear, injured child, forgive, forgive your erring mother!"

"I have nothing to forgive, my dear mother. Take care of my little Lucy. Tell Louis I forgive him."

Mr. Howard heard this, ran to the bedside, and, on his knees, in the most piteous accents, implored pardon of his injured wife.

"I forgive! I forgive!" were her last words; a few moments after, she died.

After her cold and lifeless form was laid out, Mrs. Osgood requested to be left alone with the corpse. Falling on her knees by the side of it, with her eyes uplifted to Heaven, she exclaimed, in a plaintive tone—

"Oh, miserable woman that I am, I have murdered one child, and almost another! Two more I have rendered miserable! And for what? Great God! can I ever be forgiven?"

For some time she remained kneeling in that chamber of death. When she arose, she was an humble woman; ambition was satiated, avarice was satisfied. She said truly that she had murdered her child. Howard dealt the last blow, but she was equally guilty of the murder; for over the dead body of her husband she had walked to accomplish her purpose. And what had she gained but anguish, heart-rending anguish, misery of the direst kind! Mothers, beware of what you are doing. You, too, may be paving the way, almost unconsciously, to a similar wretched end. Say not this is an exaggerated story. Look around you, and can you not call to mind at least a few miserable wives? Ask the cause, and not unfrequently you may trace it to a mother's ambition. Then take warning, and shield your child from the worst fates, an unloved and unloving wife. You are responsible to a great degree; then beware how you trifle with such a responsibility.

Have you a little prattler now fondling on your bosom, to whom your heart's best affections are given? What are your views in regard to her? Does your imagination wander far into the vista of the future, and picture for her visions of wealth and earthly glory? or are you praying God to enable you to raise her for usefulness here, and Heaven and immortal happiness in eternity? Have you a daughter just on the verge of womanhood? She needs your watchful eye and prayerful attention more than ever before. Lay no schemes for the future but such as you can ask God's blessing upon. Have you one just about to enter into an engagement that must render her happy or miserable for life, and perhaps tend to the promotion or overthrow of her happiness in another world? Oh, mother, look well before you decide! What are that man's qualifications? Is he all that a praying mother could desire? Can you commit that precious one to his care, believing that he is fitted to guard such one *here*, and go hand and hand with her to everlasting joys *there?* If so, give her to him. He may be a son of poverty, no matter. God will bless them. But if, on the contrary, his recommendations are nothing more than such as Mrs. Osgood required, let us entreat you, in the name of the holy office of mother, be warned before the unchained fury of God is visited on you. Do not sell that priceless treasure for gold. If you do, your punishment will come. Take our word for it, it must come. God may not even allow you a respite until he calls you to judgment. He may punish you *here* in a way too plain to be misunderstood. But to our story.

Mr. Howard was a sincere penitent, and, for his child's sake, he was permitted to pass unpunished, at least at an earthly tribunal. No one except the family knew of his guilt. He seemed anxious to do all in his power to repair his deed, settled his vast estate on his little Lucy, and, with about four thousand dollars, left the country. Emma and Henry were married in about twelve months from Mrs. Howard's death, and went to reside in his native village.

* * * * * *

Years are gone. Henry Sherrard's name ranks high as a learned, a great, and, better still, a good man. Emma, his loving wife, has blessed him with a large family of children. It is needless to say this is a happy home. With two such beings as representatives, it could hardly be otherwise. We do not say it was exempt from the trials that fall to the lot of almost every home, yet it was just such a circle as angels might delight to gaze on. Old Mrs. Osgood lives with them, a pious, humble Christian. Emma's children are as dear to her

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as her own ever were; but she indulges none of those ideal dreams of wealth and fame in regard to them that constantly dwelt in her bosom in regard to her own offspring. Little Lucy Howard has grown up a beautiful and accomplished woman, and is married to Dr. Williamson's nephew. They live at the residence of Mr. Howard, who has become a better man. His daughter is happy in the thought that she possesses the best of fathers, little dreaming what he once was, and that by his hand she was deprived of a mother.

A letter from Eleanor, a few days since, informed her mother of her intention to visit her native State. She said little of herself, the object that once occupied her whole thoughts; yet the tone of her letter showed plainly that she had found the happiness procured by wealth at best but precarious and transient.

Laura's husband has reformed, and her prospects for happiness are brighter than formerly. Virginia is a widow, as much distinguished for humility as she once was for pride and ostentation. Thus the mother and sisters have become, by sad experience, wiser and better women. Yet this experience has been dearly bought—with a daughter's blood and a sister's wrongs. Mothers, will you be warned, or must you pass through a similar ordeal to show you your duty?

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THE CONVENT OF ST. LUCIA.: FROM THE GERMAN OF ELISE POLKO.
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Mar 1855; 50, American Periodicals
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THE CONVENT OF ST. LUCIA.

FROM THE GERMAN OF ELISE POLKO.

It was on the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, in the year 1791, that the bells of the beautiful convent of St. Lucia, near Rome, rang the hour of evening prayer. Crowds of pious worshippers thronged to the gates. It was interesting to watch the various groups as they passed by, the picturesque costumes of the foreigners, the white veils, the beautiful women adorned with flowers, and the tall, proud men with sprigs of fragrant orange-blossoms in their bosoms. In every eye was the glance of full life of pleasure, of joy in the coming spring. The glowing sun seemed to imprint a warm parting kiss on all these brown, richly-colored cheeks, to embrace with his setting rays these strong, manly forms, and then gradually shrouded his own glories in the rosy veil of evening twilight. The windows of the little church glowed with the reflected light. Within, clouds of incense were rising, and the pale light of the candles on the altar could scarcely pierce the floating vapors. A dim twilight prevailed; the image of St. Lucia was almost covered with costly wreaths and flowers, and looked like a May queen; the priest extended his arm in blessing, the multitude of the faithful sank upon their knees; then, from the high concealed choir, resounded the "Kyrie eleison" of the pious nuns. How softly those gentle voices floated on the air! how glorious and elevating was the music of Palestrina! Sublime and pure the expressive air rose amid those combined voices, which often strove to overpower, to submerge it, but still conquered by its triumphant notes; modestly yielding, they at length united harmoniously in the soft accompaniment and the glorious finale. The trembling souls of the hearers now rose jubilant to Heaven, as if upborne on mighty wings, now sank weeping back to earth, as if held there by tender, invisible chains. It seemed as if the parting light of day had converted itself into sound; every heart opened to its mild rays, and to every eye the little church seemed filled with wondrous light.

Then, suddenly, in the "Gloria," a soprano voice was heard, whose surprising notes roused the multitude from their sweet delirium. The voice was of penetrating clearness, almost piercing in its purity, overpowering in its fulness. Its tone had nothing in common with that of

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the other singers, the sound did not mingle with other sounds; alone, free from any melting weakness, full and high, it floated up and down the vaulted arches of the church. In the "Credo" the wondrous voice was silent; another milder soprano took its place. At the close, however, in the heart-moving "Agnus Dei," and "Dona nobis pacem," again, like a glittering, polished, all-conquering spear, it pierced the heavy clouds of incense. There was no excitement in it. There was no mere youthful freshness in those notes; it was a voice characterized neither by age nor sex—a voice that gave one the impression it had always been so, and must always be so.

The people were powerfully affected. "Holy Mary," murmured an old woman, "that was not the song of a living woman!" And, crossing herself vehemently, she uttered a low prayer. Her startled dark-haired neighbor nodded assent, and whispered the exclamation to a man kneeling beside her, whose searching glances tried in vain to penetrate the grate of the choir.

The mass was over. The women, greatly excited, left the church, the men shook their heads; every one spoke of the marvellous singing—no one knew the name of the concealed singer. The tapers were extinguished, and the lovely twilight of an Italian evening put an end to a thousand questions, doubts, and expectations.

The next day, when the morning, the smiling, radiant morning of Italy, looked with loving eyes into the windows of the little church, an expectant multitude was already assembled there. Every face was turned with an expression of eager expectation towards the choir from which matins were to be sung. And again the voice was heard, again every heart trembled with mingled fear and joy, and again the hearers were filled with wonder. Suddenly, a blooming young woman, trembling and glowing with emotion, cried out, "Holy Mary! I see the wonder! It is a child singing!" And, in truth, there was to be seen behind the grate the slender figure of a girl about ten years old, from whose open lips the enchanting sounds flowed forth. The features of the child's face were severely regular, but devoid of all excitement, and her young cheeks were pale and transparent. From the moment of this discovery, the excitement of the people increased from one hour to another. Early and late, crowds hastened to the convent to hear the wonderful little singer, whose voice could be distinguished in the loudest chorus; and the report of such great powers enshrined in a child's form spread through the whole neighborhood, extending even to Rome, and the rush to hear mass at the convent of St. Lucia became every day greater and more violent.

But the number of the faithful who received the miracle—for so it was considered—in thankfulness, was small compared with the multitude who, in the restlessness of a new excitement, filled their hearts and heads with suppositions and doubts concerning the person of the songstress.

"It is one of the boarding scholars of the convent who sings, so they say there," was the report of some. "But, at all events, she is grown up, at least eighteen or nineteen years old, and, owing to some natural defect, has the appearance of a child. No child on earth can sing so."

"No, no," exclaimed others; "they have been imposing upon you with their silly tales. It is one of the young nuns—sister Barbara—we know all about it; and that young child was only listening."

"Not at all," replied some of the women; "a miracle has been wrought. St. Lucia has sent the pious Abbess Theresa an angel from heaven."

"What childish nonsense are you talking there?" exclaimed a powerful-looking man, with a sensible, strongly marked face. "The whole thing is a piece of shameful deception. We are taken in, imposed upon, to get the silver coins out of our pockets." The people crowded round him, and the orator continued. "Yes, listen to me, and the truth of what I say will be clear as daylight. A few words will explain the whole matter. The convent is poor; St. Lucia wants a new velvet dress and golden hangings, and, to do all this, they must get large alms; so they thought of a plan for attracting credulous people here. They have had a machine constructed in Rome, a piece of clock-work in human form that sings, a wax doll with flute stops. I tell you it is no child or man either that trills away there so loud and clear; it is a horrid puppet."

The excited crowd listened, shuddered, crossed themselves, argued, contended, and at last believed.

"In very truth, Matteo is in the right of it!" thundered a Hercules, as he clenched his fist with a savage gesture. "The singsong is a piece of priests' trickery, and nothing more! Who ever heard such child's singing—a child with a voice strong enough for a giant? Suffer yourselves to be imposed upon no longer! The miraculous songstress is nothing but a wooden doll with a wax face. The thing is wound up

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like a clock, and sings just as they set it. I have seen such figures more than once at a famous old professor's in Rome."

"Yes; and it is no wonder we felt a cold shudder when those clear, pure, flute-like notes struck our ears; it was a foreboding of this devilish trickery," added another, with kindling eyes.

"This abominable imposition is a scandal to the church of St. Lucia; we must not suffer it; we must expose it, put an end to it, and all the saints will help us in such a good work," chimed in a third.

There was a perfect tumult among the excited multitude. The women, with expressive gestures, described the rigid wax face of the puppet and its dead glass eyes, and said they could not distinguish a word of the sacred anthems she had sung. Many had distinctly heard a strange rattling noise at the end of the "Gloria." "The clock-work had run down then," they whispered to one another. The men grew more and more excited by their own violent words, and the most gentle of the women began to kindle at the angry looks of their husbands, and lovers, and brothers. A universal pilgrimage to the convent was resolved upon, to demand the surrender of the machine, the deceptive singing doll.

As the evening red began to fade away from the sky, and the orange-blossoms gave out their sweet odors, and the fluttering night-moths flew around luxuriating in the fragrant air, and the stars shone forth like soft lamps in the dark dome of heaven—amid all these peaceful influences, a numerous crowd of men, turbulent and excited, took their way to the quiet convent, thundered at its ivy-wreathed gate, and urgently demanded admission. The alarmed prioress directed it should be opened, and stepped forward to meet the aggressors. With a cry of terror, the nuns had taken refuge in their cells.

The venerable face of the pious woman, her tall figure, and the crucifix she held on high before her, produced an effect upon the multitude; their confused cries subsided, the women fell upon their knees, the men retreated, and only one spokesman reverentially approached the prioress and announced to her the wishes, suspicions, and demands of his companions.

Astonishment and distrust were pictured on the features of the earnest woman.

"My children," she exclaimed, "is it possible that you accuse your mother Theresa of such deception? Is it possible you have degraded yourselves so low, and wounded me so deeply? Go hence! repent and bewail your transgression! for that voice which has led you into this deplorable error, that voice which has stirred and excited you so powerfully, came from the breast of a child blessed of Heaven. It floated down from the innocent lips of a maiden of Sinigaglia, but ten years old, who receives her education at our convent."

"We want to see the child," exclaimed some rough voices. The people again grew excited at the sound. "Yes, yes, we must *see* the enchantress, hear her speak, touch her face and her hands, and feel her warm breath!" And the cries grew louder, and the gestures more threatening. The exhortations of the abbess were unheard, and the usually quiet court of the convent was filled with noisy voices.

Mother Theresa disappeared. She returned, urging forward towards the excited crowd a pale, tender, trembling girl. Her regular features and colorless complexion shone like yellow wax beneath her smooth dark hair, and her large dark eyes gazed with terror on the strange expressive faces before her.

"Angelica," said the prioress, gently, "be not afraid. Be courageous; help thy mother Theresa and these deluded people. Lift up thy voice and greet the queen of heaven."

Angelica opened her lips, and began an ancient, simple "Salve Regina;" but with a power, purity, and sublimity, with a precision and calmness, that involuntarily bowed the knees of the silent multitude. The deep peace, the unspotted innocence to which these tones gave utterance could only come from a breast unconscious of the sweet sorrows and bitter pleasures of life, its roses and its thorns. The clear pure notes resounded far in the beautiful night of that blooming land. Glorious and soft, the starlight fell on the heads of the crowd, on the youthful brow of the singer, and the earnest face of the deeply moved abbess.

When Angelica ended, the prostrate figures arose, and, with that overpowering, irrepressible enthusiasm which is the peculiar characteristic of the south, pressed round the child. Sobbing, they kissed the little hands of the smiling girl, the hem of her garment, her glowing cheeks, her feet, caressed her with tears of rapture, blessed her, and a unanimous, triumphant shout rent the air—"Long live Angelica Catalani!"

Mother Theresa soon after procured the removal of the wonderfully gifted child from the convent; she could not endure the crowds that disturbed her still asylum. But, in after days, she bitterly repented it, for the little Angelica in a short time grew, as the whole world knows, into the great Catalani. Europe was at her feet; and what a dowry of splendid robes, necklaces, and glittering crowns would St. Lucia have received from this adoration:

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THE COSMETIC.: A SKETCH OF SOUTHERN LIFE.
Forsyth, Pauline
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THE COSMETIC.

A SKETCH OF SOUTHERN LIFE.

BY PAULINE FORSYTH.

THAT a slight event has sometimes made or marred the happiness of a life-time is a fact, doubtless, familiar to all who have read or observed much. Mohammed's life was saved by the flight of a bird, and Bruce drew from a spider's perseverance the energy and resolution to fight his last triumphant battles. If the destiny of those with whom the destinies of nations are involved is influenced by what seems to us such mere trifles, it is not difficult to imagine that the fate of little people often hangs upon a circumstance in itself most trivial and unimportant.

In one of the pleasantest streets of New Orleans stands the residence of Mr. Davis Bertram. It is only necessary to enter it to see that every luxury or comfort that taste could select or wealth procure has been employed to fill and ornament the rooms and halls, all spacious, airy, and elegant. Into the softly shaded apartments the fresh cool air of morning finds its way through clustering vines and shadowing trees, and leaves everywhere traces of its wanderings over the perfumed orange groves and jessamine flowers around. All through the house, in the halls, on the veranda, or in the luxurious drawing-rooms, the light tones and laughter, and the little tripping feet of children, make a never-ceasing domestic melody. If any visitor, puzzled by the ubiquity of these household treasures, should take the trouble to gather them all in one group, he would find that five little Bertrams—"her little steps," Mrs. Bertram called them—were all that were necessary to keep up from morning till night a chattering and pattering, that ended only when sleep had laid its soft calmness over each little foot and tongue.

Five prettier children it would have been hard

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to find. And so evidently the mother thought; for the most delicate muslins, and softest laces, and purest linens set off to the best advantage each little one.

If you would like to pay Mrs. Bertram an unceremonious visit, you need not look for her in the drawing-rooms, with their elegant curtains, their soft, rich carpets, and their comfortable lounges and chairs; neither would you be any more likely to find her in the library, filled though it is with books of every sort, and with a few exquisite pictures hanging against its walls, seeming to invite you to an intellectual kind of dream-life. But Mrs. Bertram is not a reading woman; and, besides her five cherubs that have the range of the house, there is another very little cherub that only perpetrated its first smile a week ago. It lies all the day in the nursery, doubling its rose-bud of a fist, and kicking its equally rosy feet in a way that seems to Mrs. Bertram, who has seen the same phenomenon only five times before in her life, always new, curious, interesting, and delightful.

The nursery has been for the last few years Mrs. Bertram's principal abiding place. But she does not look in the least worn or harassed. She has a fair and matronly kind of beauty, and as she bends over her youngest darling, and tries by all kinds of maternal blandishments to win from it another dawn of a smile, you can see on her placid brow, and by the tranquil light of her eye and her sweet smile, that cares and time have touched her lightly.

In another street, but a little distance from the one in which Mr. Bertram lives, stands a row of low squalid buildings. In one of the smallest and most confined rooms in the poorest of these houses sits a woman busily sewing. The garment she is making is evidently not for herself. People that live in such places do not wear linen of a texture so fine, nor laces so exquisitely delicate. She sews hurriedly and rapidly, for she knows that when that haggard and stern-looking man, who lies stretched on the poor pallet they call a bed, rouses himself from the deep sleep of intoxication, she will have to lay aside the work by which she procures food for both, to administer to the immediate wants of one whose demands are always insisted on with unfeeling pertinacity.

As her fingers move steadily, she thinks of her four children, two of whom are in their graves, and the other two removed from the degrading influence of their father's example, and from the heavy pressure of poverty, by the care of kind relatives, who would do the same service for the wife, if she would consent to leave her worthless husband. She made the attempt once, but was recalled to his side by hearing that he was suffering under a severe attack of fever, and could never be persuaded to leave him again. Truly there is a love stronger than death.

But for one of those trivial mischances which exercise so great an influence over our lives, Mrs. Bertram would have been in the place of that poor toiler with her needle; instead of living as she did in the midst of all the blessedness of affluence and affection.

My first acquaintance with Henrietta Williams was on the occasion of Virginia Percy's marriage to Lieutenant Marshall. She was to have three bridesmaids—her sister Ellen, Henrietta Williams, a distant relative of the family, and myself. According to appointment, we assembled at Mr. Percy's three or four days before the wedding, to keep up the spirits of the bride elect, and to prevent her from sinking under the crisis of her destiny, that was impending over her in all its awful and irrevocable certainty.

It is no slight matter to prepare for a wedding where there are no confectioners or professed cooks and well-drilled waiters to be found, and Mrs. Percy was quite overwhelmed with the manifold duties that devolved upon her. Besides the general superintendence of the bridal paraphernalia, and of all the ordinary offices of the household, there was an enormous table, the whole length of a very large dining-room, that was to be heaped up with all manner of delicacies, besides a large side-table, on which the substantial part of the supper, the hams, chickens, ducks, and other things of the kind, were to be placed.

Ellen Percy, Henrietta, and myself took upon ourselves the management of the lighter and more ornamental portion of the arrangements. Virginia made a show of assisting us; but, having proved her incapacity by a series of blunders, she was, with one accord, requested not to make another attempt to be useful, seeing that in every instance disaster had followed her like a shadow. She hurried out of the dining-room to avoid the raillery that was showered upon her, and took refuge in her own room, where she remained, for the greater part of the day, in a sort of mazy, but happy kind of state, in which her own thoughts seemed to be to her such satisfactory companions that any interruption from us of the outer world was a thing to be endured with a gentle patience, but not sought or appreciated.

Henrietta Williams was rather a pretty girl, but quiet and reserved. She seldom spoke un-

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less she was addressed, and appeared quite absorbed in her occupations.

Late in the afternoon she slipped away from us, and I saw her walking down the broad straight path that led to the gate. As I gazed after her in some surprise at her choice of a solitary walk, at an age when all are generally inclined to sociability of the warmest kind, I noticed that she turned off into a side path that led into the woods. It was winter, though the warm, bright days laughed in our faces as we called them by that cold name, and, through the bare branches and trunks of the trees, I could long distinguish the waving folds of the light gray cashmere as it floated in and out, while its wearer steadily pursued an onward course into the deepest depths of the discrowned woods. At last it entirely disappeared, and then I fell into a self-reproachful train of thought.

"How could I," thought I to myself, "allow Miss Williams to go by herself so far? She is pale; doubtless she is not well, and the physicians have prescribed exercise. She is timid, evidently, and would not like to ask any of us to accompany her, as we are so busy. Virginia and Ellen are really too much occupied to think of it. But I was doing nothing. It was very stupid in me to stand staring after her out of the window, instead of running out to overtake her."

After I had brought myself into a meek and humble state of mind, I was roused from my self-upbraidings by a summons to witness the triumphant success of some culinary experiment, and confess that, in the excitement and delight consequent thereupon, I entirely forgot Henrietta and her solitary walk.

As far as visitors were concerned, our days passed very quietly. It was an understood matter that no gentleman was to be admitted to the house to divert our attention from our important duties; and the ladies of the neighborhood had too much discretion to call at such a busy time. And all day long we were really kept quite hard at work. Our evenings were spent round a large fire in a room which had been appropriated to Virginia and her bridesmaids. Here Ellen took it upon herself to do the honors. She was almost seventeen, and she bore the burden of so many years with a spirit and self-reliance that were truly refreshing. The rest of us were a year or two older, and were already beginning to think it necessary to be a little grave and discreet. But for Ellen, we should have sat still and conversed in a proper and sentimental manner suited to the occasion; but she set us upon all kinds of queer experiments.

After telling us ghost stories and robber stories, and tales of witchcraft and murder, until we hardly dared to look behind us, she proposed a number of charms by which those of us whose destiny was still undecided might discover who their future husband was to be. We spent a long evening trying to muster courage to go alone into a dark place and repeat an incantation, which Ellen dictated to us, three times; after which, we were assured, our future husband would appear in a luminous vision before us. But each attempt ended in a little shriek, and a sudden rushing into the friendly light.

Unsuccessful in this, the next night Ellen introduced the subject of complexion, always an interesting one to young girls, and induced us all to put on, before retiring, a mask of dough, assuring us that it was the best thing in the world to make the skin fair and white. Just as we had fitted the masks nicely to the face, and were beginning to get a little uneasy and nervous at the hideous, death-like appearance our companions made, Henrietta entered the room. She had been mysteriously absent for an hour, and we had been wondering what had become of her. At the first glimpse of our corpse-like faces, she shrieked and turned to run, but fell trembling on a couch near her. Nor would she consent to pass the night in the room until we unmasked. I was quite relieved myself to see Virginia's real face again, for I was conscious of a strong shrinking and repugnance to the figure that had represented her a short time before.

Ellen did not take our weak fears very patiently; but, after reproving us rather severely, and telling us that it was ridiculous to be afraid of each other, she asked "if we had ever tried buttermilk and tansy?"

"No," said we.

"Well, that is one of the best things in the world for the skin. It takes off freckles and sunburn, and everything else. Henrietta, you ought to use it, for you know that, in the spring, you are always troubled with freckles."

"Not much," said Henrietta.

"But there is no need for any. I will get some fresh buttermilk to-morrow, and you must try it."

The next afternoon I saw Henrietta setting forth on her solitary walk. I hastened to overtake and join her. She was far in advance of me, and I soon lost sight of her; but, following the narrow winding path through the woods, I came at last on a small open space. Henrietta was standing there, turned away from the direction in which I stood, talking in a low voice to

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a young gentleman. He raised his eyes as I approached, and our glances met. I turned quickly away, and went back wiser than I came. From an instinctive feeling of delicacy, I did not mention to any one what I had discovered, and I saw by Henrietta's manner that she was unaware of my untimely attention to her.

This was the last evening before the important one of the wedding, and Ellen, pressing upon us the necessity of looking as well as possible, urged us to use the buttermilk she had obtained for our beautifying. This was an improvement on any of her other suggestions, and we yielded willingly, not without a certain faith in her assertion, that we should find ourselves as fair as lilies in the morning.

Henrietta was again absent, and did not return until the candle was dying away in the socket, and we were almost asleep.

"Where have you been?" asked Virginia.

"On the porch. It was such a pleasant night that I could not bear to stay in the house."

"Have you been alone all this time?" said Ellen, pityingly.

"Oh, I don't mind that; I sit alone a great deal at home."

I noticed the indirectness in the answer, and understood it; but the others were unsuspicious.

"If you will call Abby, she will bring you a fresh candle," said Virginia, half asleep.

"No, I thank you. The moon gives light enough for me."

I fancied from the tones of Henrietta's voice that she had been weeping; but she kept in the shade, so that I could not see her. Just as she was about to retire, Ellen roused herself to remind her of the cosmetic.

"I put some away for you," said she. "It is in a bottle on the lower shelf in the wardrobe. Shall I get up to find it?"

"Oh, no, I can get it easily. Here it is; how shall I use it?"

"Wash your face thoroughly—very thoroughly with it; that is all."

Henrietta obeyed, and soon all was silent. Virginia slept soundly by my side. From the other bed I could distinguish, amid the regular breathings of Ellen, a deep sigh that seemed to be forced from the heavy heart of her companion. After a while even that ceased, and I was beginning to lose my own consciousness, when I was roused by Henrietta's voice. She was calling Ellen in a low, suppressed, but somewhat impatient tone. Ellen's slumber was never an easy one to shake off, and it was some time before she showed any tokens of wakefulness. At last she asked "What?" in a drowsy tone.

"How does this buttermilk feel on your face?" asked Henrietta.

"Feel? Yes—it feels—yes"——And Ellen was sound asleep again.

"Oh, Ellen, do wake up for a moment. Is it sticky?"

"Sticky? Yes—oh, yes, very."

And again Ellen dropped her head on the pillow. Several minutes passed; then I again heard Henrietta.

"Ellen—Ellen!"

"Yes," murmured Ellen.

"Something is the matter with me, something very strange. I can't open my mouth; my face is perfectly stiff. Do get a light."

Ellen rose slowly, and, calling the nurse from her mother's room, soon procured a candle.

"What 's de matter, Miss Ellen?" asked Abby.

"I am afraid Cousin Henrietta is sick," was the reply. "Come and see if she wants anything."

Henrietta lay with her eyes half-opened, and blinking as the rays of the candle fell on them. Aunt Abby looked at her a moment, and exclaimed—

"Bless us, how your face do shine! And it's all red and fiery. What have you been and done?"

"It's that buttermilk," said Henrietta.

"Oh, no, it cannot be that," said Ellen; "that's impossible."

Aunt Abby took a bottle from the toilet-table. "Is dis what you used?" asked she.

"Yes," said Henrietta.

Aunt Abby examined it sagaciously. "Dis is misses' bottle of varnish," said she. "I was in a mighty hurry dis morning, and Miss Ellen called me in to dress her; and so I slipt the varnish in the wardrobe, and never thought no more about it till dis blessed minute. You 's varnished yourself, honey, dat 's all."

"Oh, Aunt Abby, will it ever come off?"

"Yes, I s'pect so, but your skin will come off, too, mos' likely. I'll do what I can for you."

Mrs. Percy's medical knowledge was called into action in this emergency, and everything that could be thought of was done for Henrietta's relief; but the next morning she was far from presentable. Another bridesmaid had to be obtained to fill her place. While confined to her room and bed, she lay suffering evidently from something more than mere bodily pain. She was anxious and nervous, and her eyes followed us about with an earnest, wistful glance, as though she wished, yet shrank from asking some important question.

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Among the guests of the wedding, I observed the same gentleman whom I had seen talking to Henrietta in the woods. He was a small, slight man, whom one, at first glance, might call insignificant; but a few minutes' study of his face and head would remove that impression. There was upon them the marks of an extraordinary mind, of a strong will, and of a perfect, though carefully repressed, consciousness of his own power. I became very much interested in watching him, and perceiving how naturally his intellectual superiority and force of character enabled him to be the tacitly acknowledged leader in every conversation in which he took a part. His manner towards ladies was particularly curious. There seemed to be a kind of unaccountable fascination in it, which gave to his little *tête-à-têtes* with them an air of love-making, so devoted and absorbed did he seem with each one. Young as he was, and he could not have been more than twenty-three or four, he had a *blasé* worldly-wise look that would have suited a man of forty, and that did not harmonize very well with a youthful recklessness and impetuosity that were now and then apparent.

He sought an introduction to me, and I could not repress a feeling of repugnance that rose involuntarily as I returned his salutation. If politeness had permitted, I would have turned away without speaking, but in less than five minutes, I was quite charmed by his manner, so self-possessed, and yet so deferential and insinuating. His powers of conversation were remarkable, and he had a skill in flattery that, distrustful as I was of compliments and complimenters, induced me to listen to the pretty things he said to me, with a feeling of satisfaction that one person at least thoroughly appreciated me.

We did not allude to our former meeting, but when Mr. Powell, for that was his name, had brought me into a general communicative mind, he began to question me about Henrietta and her illness. Henrietta had begged us not to tell the cause of her non-appearance, so that I could not satisfy his curiosity entirely; but, remembering that Aunt Abby had said, "it would be two weeks before she would be fit to be seen, for her face was blistered all over," I mentioned that circumstance to Mr. Powell. He seemed somewhat troubled, grieved I thought, at the prospect of not seeing her for so long; and I sympathized with him. Soon after, I saw him talking with Nannie Porter, a soft, giggling, and rather pretty girl, who had the reputation of being an heiress in a small way. He hovered around her the whole evening, and they talked in whispers in the corners of the room and in the hall. It seemed to me that he was paying her quite too much attention, considering that his heart was engaged elsewhere.

At last the wedding guests departed. I sought my room with feet so weary with dancing that they could hardly bear me thither. Henrietta was waiting to hear all the particulars of the evening's gayety, and I was sleepily relating them, when Nannie Porter entered.

"I am going to stay here to-night, girls," she said, in a hurried way. "My head aches, and I sent Bob home with the carriage, to say that I could not come till to-morrow."

We said all that was proper, and Nannie was silent for a few minutes; then she asked me for writing materials. I told her that they were all in the library, which, owing to the house being rather crowded with guests, was at present occupied as a sleeping-room. She could not obtain them till the morning. She moved about the room uneasily. She seemed burthened with a secret too heavy for her powers of retention. At last it came out—

"Girls, will you never tell something I am going to tell you?"

Of course we promised.

"Well, I am going to be married to-morrow morning."

"To whom?" asked Henrietta.

"To some one that has loved me ever so long—more than a year. We were engaged six months ago, but mamma made me break it off, and forbade him to come to see me. He went to New Orleans after that, and mamma thinks that he is there still, or she would never have let me come here without her. But I saw him here to-night, and he told me he had been ill with a brain fever in consequence of my treating him so, and that he was near dying. He says he is constantly threatened with it again, and that if I don't marry him directly, he knows he cannot live a year. He looks pale and thin, poor fellow, and I cannot help pitying him. I have promised him that I will go with him early in the morning to a minister, who lives about seven miles from here. We can be married there, and go quietly to see mamma; but I thought I would like to send a little note first."

"What is the gentleman's name?" asked Henrietta.

"Harry Powell."

"Harry Powell!" exclaimed Henrietta. "He is engaged to me. He gave me this turquoise ring, an emblem of his truth, he said."

"He gave me this emerald," said Nannie,

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"that I might know that hope had something yet in store for us. He wrote me some pretty verses, too, about it;" and she repeated the poetry.

"He sent those very lines to me," said Henrietta. "I have them at home now."

Nannie began to cry.

"I am sure he loves me better than any one else in the world; he has told me so a hundred times. He did say once that if I did not marry him, and he survived it, he might be induced to marry some one else from interest or necessity, but that his affections would be forever blighted."

"But," said Henrietta, "he has been addressing me for three years, long before he saw you. I have refused him several times, for my friends did not like him at all, and each time he told me the same thing that he told you, and I confess I believed him. I will tell you something else. I promised to slip away from the house this evening, and go with him to the same minister's to which he was to take you, I presume, and for the same purpose. But for that varnish, I should have been Mrs. Powell by this time, and you would have made a great escape. I think we have rather cause for delight than sorrow."

But Nannie went on weeping, while Henrietta flung her ring into the fire.

"Who is this Mr. Powell?" asked I.

"He is the only son of old Judge Powell, one of the most highly respected persons in this part of the country. His father died some years ago, and left Harry a large fortune."

"Ah, I have heard of him," said I. "He gambled his property all away the first year it came into his possession. Did he not?"

"People say so," said Henrietta. "He denied it, and I never believed it till now. But now, I confess, I would believe anything of him."

"It is not true," said Nannie, sobbing.

"I think," said I, after meditating a few moments, "that Mr. Powell's matrimonial affairs are rather speculations than matters of feeling. You have more wealth than Nannie, so you would be his first choice; but, as there is danger that if he waits two or three weeks, your relations may find out his intentions and interfere, he will take the bird in the hand."

"To think that I should have been so blind as to believe him, and doubt all that my father and mother told me!" exclaimed Henrietta, in strong indignation against herself.

"I think, Pauline, it is shameful in you and Henrietta to talk in that way about Mr. Powell. He has told me himself how all these stories originated, and there is not a word of truth in any of them."

"But how do you account for his professing so much love for you and Henrietta at the same time, and evidently more desirous to win her hand than yours; for he did not speak particularly to you till I assured him that Henrietta would be confined to her room for some time, and that her mother was coming to nurse her."

"He thought I looked coldly on him, he said," said Nannie.

"Do you really believe that he loves you?" asked Henrietta, out of patience with her weakness.

"I know it," said Nannie, and her foot gave emphasis to her words. Her temper, naturally gentle and submissive, was evidently throwing off all control. We said nothing more for some time. At last Henrietta rose up, and turning to the weeping girl, said firmly—

"Nannie, I am sure, if you will only take a few days to think, you will feel as I do, rejoiced that you are saved from a life of misery with an unprincipled man. But before I go to sleep you must promise me that you will not elope with Mr. Powell to-morrow. If you do not, I shall think it my duty to rouse Colonel Percy, and let him know about it."

Nannie resisted, urged Henrietta's promise, entreated secrecy, but in vain. At last, seeing that Henrietta was about to fulfil her threat, she yielded, and gave the promise that was required of her. Henrietta and I were both young and unsuspicious, or we should not have trusted to this "lover's vow." When we woke late on a bright, sunny morning, Nannie was gone. We gave the alarm, but it was too late. Three days after, she called upon us as Mrs. Powell, happy and radiant in her bridal honors and bridal attire. She had evidently repeated to her husband some of the severe remarks we had made about him, and Henrietta and I had not spared him on that memorable evening, for, with the same tact and address with which he had paid me so many pretty compliments when it suited his purposes, he now contrived, in the most courteous manner, to make a number of caustic and bitter remarks. Every sentence he uttered to me had a sting in it, the hardest part of which to bear was, that to notice it would be the most effectual way of giving the speaker pleasure. The message he left for Henrietta with the unconscious Ellen, which she, in her ignorance, delivered with great precision, was concentrated gall and bitterness. Nannie listened to his words with evident delight, and looked triumphantly at me, as if to say—"Are you still so blind as to think that he could ever have preferred Henrietta to me?" She still believed in him.

After living a few years in a style of reckless

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extravagance, wasting all that she brought to him in riot and dissipation, Mr. Powell sank at last to his true level, that of a worthless gambler. Even then, in poverty, neglect, and unkindness, Nannie still clung with a blind devotion to her wretched husband, and her love, that could only have been called a foolish instinct in its first madness, became elevated by its patient strength and endurance into a kind of heroic affection.

After Henrietta married and went to reside in New Orleans, she discovered, by some accident, the position and circumstances of her old friend, and many a little act of kindness and attention, for which Nannie could not account, came from Mrs. Bertram's compassionate heart. In looking over her past life, Henrietta often says, "that the greatest good fortune of her life came from the use of the only cosmetic she ever tried. It proved indeed 'a blessing in disguise.'"

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THE PLAYMATES.
GERMAN OF ELISE POLKO
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Dec 1854; 49, American Periodicals
pg. 525

THE PLAYMATES.

FROM THE GERMAN OF ELISE POLKO.

A DAY in May, under the clear, brilliant sky of Italy, has a charm that we children of the north can scarcely understand, though we may sometimes imagine it in our dreams. The earth smiles and decks herself in her brightest robes; the sun looks down upon her with a warm and tender gaze, and the air is filled with the fragrance of a thousand flowers. The human heart grows and expands amid this glorious nature, exults and rejoices with all around it; and the human eye is fiery and tender as the burning sun-god himself. A cold, life-wearied face is as seldom seen there as the ice-flowers with which frost wreathes our northern windows.

So much more striking, on this account, was the appearance of a boy who, on a bright May day in the year 1793, sat alone by the sea-shore, gazing on the vast, glittering expanse of water before him, and turning his back upon the fair city of Genoa, that, like a radiant bride, rests on the bosom of the proud sea. He was a child ten years old, of slender figure, with a refined, pale face, dark hair and eyebrows, and wonderfully black eyes. The expression of his eyes was almost mysterious, from its frequent rapid changes; now flashing, ardent, proud, and triumphant; now sad as death. A clear, sweet, childish voice broke in upon the melancholy mood of the youthful dreamer. A charming little girl ran up, and, throwing herself into his arms, exclaimed—

"You naughty Nicolo, where have you been this whole long afternoon? and I have been looking for you everywhere!" and she kissed him heartily, looking lovingly on him with her large brown eyes, and, at last, shook down from her little white apron a whole heap of flowers, wild roses, myrtle-blossoms, and orange-flowers.

Nicolo embraced the little speaker, smiled quite joyously, stroked her wild, dark locks, and said, gently—

"Gianetta, I slipped away from my father. I wanted to sit still and dream, and be happy a little while, here by this beautiful, bright sea—you know the place I love best!"

Instead of answering, Gianetta began to rail at her young friend's cruel father. "He gives you no rest by night or by day," said she; "he will bring you to your grave, so my mother thinks. 'Your Nicolo is not strong,' she says; 'that mad violin of his is wearing away his soul, and his father works his body to death.' And she is right, too!" she said, with deep sadness.

"Do not believe it," Nicolo answered, in a serious tone. "I am not going to die; I cannot die until I have grown up to be a big man; and

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I am not so weak either. See here;" and, with these words, he rose up, his figure seeming to grow as he stretched it to its full height, his eyes burned with a wild fire, and a peculiar smile played round his mouth. He lifted Gianetta suddenly from the ground, and, with his strong arms, held her over the glancing waves at his feet. The little girl did not turn pale; she did not move; but sighed gently as Nicolo set her down again upon the ground. She said nothing more about dying, however, but looked slyly at the boy as he stood by her side. Her charming *naïveté* soon returned. She prattled and sang, and Nicolo listened patiently to her thousand childish schemes, and her stories about her flowers and birds. And if, in the midst of this sweet prattle, he fell into a melancholy mood, a kiss or a gentle touch of Gianetta's hand would quickly rouse him, and then she grew quite radiant and light-hearted, and was inexpressibly lovely.

Thus they sat together by the sea-shore, with the deep blue sky above them. The brilliant sunshine poured down on both those young heads, but the brow of the boy was earnest and full of care, the girl's face was like spring itself. When it began to grow dark, they went homewards arm in arm, passing through many wide streets until they turned into a little side street, at the end of which stood two houses nearly covered with vines; Gianetta lived in one, Nicolo in the other, opposite to her. The boy encountered the frowning face of a hard, severe father. Gianetta's mother stood at her door, looking out anxiously, and kissed the wild little girl tenderly as she entered. The children said "Good-night," and parted.

As Nicolo, with a deep sigh, entered his solitary little chamber, he hastily opened the low window, that the lovely night air might come in, took from a small coffin-like case an old violin, which he gazed upon with passionate tenderness, and began a fantasia upon it. The pure, strangely powerful sounds were heard afar in the silent night, and floated up and down in the narrow chamber, so that the walls seemed to shake and tremble with their undulations. Scarcely was the first note heard when a large and beautifully marked spider ran into the room from the thick vine-leaves that surrounded the window. "Welcome, little Silvercup," said Nicolo, kindly, and laid his hand upon the ledge of the window. The spider ran quickly upon it, and the boy placed her upon the frame of his violin, where she held fast with her little feet, and remained fixed and motionless, listening to the sea of harmony, as wave after wave passed over her. The boy played and played, until his arm grew weary, his eyelids began to droop, and the morning, with her rosy veil of light, to look in at his window. Then he laid down the beloved violin. The spider again showed signs of life, crept over Nicolo's hand as if to thank him, and he carried her to the window, where she quickly disappeared amid the foliage of the vine. The boy followed her with his eyes; the feeling of comfortless solitude came over him, a feeling that overpowered him every night when little Silvercup, this strange playmate of his sad early years, had gone from him.

Nicolo clung to the faithful little creature with real love. The first note of his violin summoned her, and it was only when the last sound died away that she awoke from her stupefaction, from the strange intoxicating dreams into which these enchanting melodies transported her. Often when Nicolo, lost in deep revery, dreamed that his bold ambitious wishes and proud hopes were realized, and mechanically struck the strings, Silvercup would softly creep in, and the boy felt her touch like a gentle kiss, and, closing his eyes, would forget his loneliness, and that no one loved him. His father was his severe master; his tender mother was dead; the boys of his own age shrunk from him as if afraid; little Gianetta alone played with him and fondled him; but Nicolo's heart was divided between the warm-hearted little girl and his strange window friend. Gianetta could not bear the spider. "They are witches," she said, and was afraid of them. Nicolo never put Silvercup on his violin when the child was with him, and, listening breathlessly to his wonderful playing, had crouched in a corner of the room. The spider soon seemed to perceive she was not welcome at such times. She never crept in when Gianetta was there, but if Nicolo approached the window with his violin, and gave a stolen glance outside, he always saw his mute listener hanging motionless on a vine-leaf.

Gianetta, however, was not satisfied when his weary arm sank down from exhaustion, and the sweet sounds ceased. Nicolo must tell her stories, and he did it willingly. Wild and fearful were the tales he related to the listening child; and not only these—no, all the dreams, too, of his own ardent heart, all the plans of his struggling soul, he confided to the silent, faithful breast of his loving little friend, and she could not answer him a word; she only pressed his hot, feverish hand more and more closely in her own, and her large eyes gazed tenderly on him, as if they felt and clearly understood him.

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Then he would tell her of the illustrious German master, Mozart; how, in his sixth year, he had written great concerts, and had shone like a star in the heaven of musical art; and his cheeks would burn, and, trembling with excitement, glowing tears of indignation gushed from his eyes. "See, Gianetta," he said, with a bitter smile, "what a poor, miserable bungler I am compared to him;" and the little girl knew not how to comfort him.

One day Nicolo, while a prey to these inward tortures, had been practising, under his father's direction, the most monotonous and difficult exercises. His hands were wearied, his forehead glowed; all the force and life of his whole body seemed concentrated in his eyes; they shone strangely. He suddenly heard the voice of Gianetta's mother anxiously and hastily calling his name. Nicolo hastened to her. Gianetta was suddenly taken ill; she had been attacked by a violent fever. She fixed her eyes long and earnestly on him, her favorite playmate, her friend. He understood her meaning, and brought his violin. His heart was in a wild tumult. "Gianetta, a lullaby for thee!" he passionately exclaimed. She smiled. Then the magic violin of the boy poured forth its enrapturing harmonies, strangely sweet and soothing, as if lulling her to rest. When he had finished, Gianetta raised herself up from her couch, and called Nicolo by name. He threw his arms around her. "Thank thee, my darling," she gently whispered. "Nicolo, I shall sleep sweetly, but thou must not rest yet. Thou must shine upon the earth, a bright, surpassing star. Go forth, far, far away from here. Think of me and my last words." The affectionate child bowed her head and died.

Nicolo stayed all night beside her beloved form. The next day, half beside himself, he wandered aimlessly about. As he returned home late in the evening, his dark, quiet room made him shudder. From his window he looked directly into Gianetta's chamber. Candles were lighted there; the child lay upon a bier adorned with flowers, buried in flowers, angelically lovely. A monk kneeled beside the coffin and prayed for the pure young spirit which had been so early called from its fair home. "Farewell, tender, loving heart," said the mourning boy, in a low tone, and hot tears coursed down his pale cheeks. "I shall go away, far away—ah, as far as I can! Nothing now holds me back; alone, unloved!" and he fell upon his knees, and sobbed convulsively. At the same moment he felt a soft, peculiar touch upon his hand; he started, and Silvercup crept over it. "It is you, my dumb darling; alas, now my only playmate," exclaimed Nicolo, while a momentary ray of joy gleamed in his countenance. He looked musingly upon the faithful creature. At length he rose up. "One more parting greeting for Gianetta, and then away into the wide world with thee, powerful, and heavenly, and only beloved of my heart!" and, with these words, he pressed his violin passionately to his bosom. Then the strings sang with more mysterious power than ever. Notes of enrapturing sweetness, yet trembling with sorrow, were wafted over to the sleeping Gianetta. The dead seemed to smile; the sweet flowers trembled; the tapers flickered; the praying monk dropped his folded hands, and strange, enchanting dreams overpowered him.

When the morning sun looked with his glowing eyes into the little room, there lay upon the floor a half-fainting boy, his violin in his arms; upon its strings was Silvercup—dead.

Was the prophesy of the lovely Gianetta fulfilled? The boy's name was Nicolo Paganini. Have you ever heard of him?

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THE SEARCH FOR THE UNKNOWN.
Forsyth, Pauline
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Mar 1855; 50, American Periodicals
pg. 236

THE SEARCH FOR THE UNKNOWN.

BY PAULINE FORSYTH.

FREDERICK ABBOTT was a very happy man; that was easy to be seen as, one pleasant morning in June, he moved about his nicely arranged room, placing one article after another of his wardrobe in his trunk, with the particularity generally believed most unjustly to be the peculiar characteristic of unmarried ladies of a certain age. He was a very handsome man; but it was not his consciousness of this fact that caused the exultingly complacent look that beamed in every line of his face, for he had known for the last five years that he was considered one of the best-looking men in Boston, and he had borne the distinction with a composure and apparent indifference that augured well for the good sense and manly strength of his character.

"Fred, you do look most unmercifully happy," said a friend of his, young Dr. Lennox, who had been gazing at him for some time. "It seems to me now that, if you were a true friend, one of the Orestes and Pylades sort, you wouldn't be going about with that exasperating smile when a man that has been a doctor a year, and has never even seen a patient, is sitting under your very eyes. A little more sympathy would be more becoming our mutual relations, Mr. Abbott."

"Haven't you had a patient yet, George?"

"A man sent for me once in a great hurry, but he died before I could get to him; and, since then, I am afraid I am considered unfortunate in my practice. At any rate, the fact that stares me in my face, whichever way I turn, is the melancholy one that I am a gentleman of leisure, and that the last of the five thousand dollars left me to learn a profession and establish myself in business is melting away. I am *abimé*, as Miss Goldthwait would say, sunk to the depths of despair, and your cold-hearted felicity was all that was wanted to complete my desolation."

"Why don't you try the country, George? There is so much competition here that it is no wonder you don't succeed, however skilful you may be. One of our best physicians told me once that he had been in practice twenty years before he had gained a reputation, or business enough to allow him to marry with any prospect of supporting a family comfortably."

"Job had friends, and so have I," said Dr. Lennox. "I never realized how much he suffered till now. You advise the country, and I suppose it will have to come to that at last. That fate has been hanging over my brightest visions like a wet blanket for the last year, and I am almost crushed with it already. I have no faith in the country. Twice in my life have I tried rural felicity, as it is ironically called, and each time I returned to the city perfectly worn out with the exertion of trying to find something to do with myself. I suppose there are persons in the country that have the usual amount of faculties. I wonder what they do with them all?"

"I never have been so happy as when I lived in the country," said Mr. Abbott.

"You think so because you were a little boy, and didn't know any better; but I remember you when you first came here from Westbrook twelve years ago. You were a pale, melancholy, quiet stripling, no more like what you are now than a caterpillar is like a butterfly."

"Yes; but I had just been left an orphan

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then, and my uncle, the only near relative I had, obtained a situation for me in the store I am in now; and, after promising to pay my board for the first year, as I received only fifty dollars from the firm, told me very plainly and decidedly that, under no circumstances, was I ever to expect anything more from him. Any boy of fourteen thrown upon himself in that way, without a friend in the city, and very few out of it, and only five dollars in the world, would be melancholy and quiet."

"Was that all you began the world with?"

"Every cent; and that I considered a loan, as my uncle gave it to me. I paid it back, together with the rest he had expended for me, out of my first savings. He didn't wish to take it; but I insisted upon it. I had that satisfaction."

"You began with five dollars, and I with five thousand, and now you are receiving more than three thousand a year, and I nothing. How long is it since you have been raised from your position of head clerk to the dignity of a partner?"

"Only a few hours. It was decided upon late last night, and that is the reason I wear my new honors with so little of the nonchalance or indifference I should show if I were more accustomed to them. Indeed, the proposal took me by surprise. I had reason to expect it might be made in a few years, but not so soon."

"You will be marrying and settling down now, I suppose?" said Dr. Lennox.

"I can afford to think of it, at least," was the reply.

"Yes, with three thousand a year, one can afford to marry even in Boston. Who is it to be, Fred?"

"I don't know yet. I have a little cousin in Westbrook that I sometimes think I love better than any one else; but I have not seen her for a long time, and I presume she has forgotten me. If you are thinking of going to the country, George, why don't you go there? It's a very pretty place, and I will give you a letter to my uncle. He is a good enough sort of man as the world goes, and he will be very polite to you for my sake; for he thinks a great deal of me, now that he finds I can get along by myself. The principal physician there is very old, I know."

"Well, I will think about it. As well there as anywhere out of Boston. Where are you going to-day?"

"I am about to set out on a business tour through New England, and expect to have a very pleasant time."

"Take care and don't fall in love with any country damsel before you come back, or Miss Sargent, and Miss Preston, and Miss Mary Jackson, and half a dozen more that I have not the energy to name, would be inconsolable. Your life is a great success, Fred, in everything."

Fred would have liked to say something modest and self-depreciatory, but his truthfulness prevented him. He had been successful in business and in society, and he knew it very well. Six answers to as many invitations from the best families in the city lay on his table waiting for the arrival of his errand-boy; and he had quite an assortment of purses, slippers, and smoking-caps. For he was by no means a perfect character, and latterly he had found himself involved in several desperate flirtations.

He had, theoretically, as great a contempt for that mode of frittering away one's life and one's affections as the staidest matron could have, but practically it was very pleasant to go through all the little excitement of love-making, and to find one's self trembling on the very verge of the awful declaration, yet restrained by some secret influence until the tide in the affair had taken another turn, and left him safe on the dry sands of indifference. Each time he had resolved that it should never be so again; but so far his resolutions had yielded to the first strong temptation. Dr. Lennox prophesied that he was destined to die an old bachelor.

"I never yet knew a man that went on as you do, Fred, that didn't come to that deplorable end. Ask any of the good-looking old bachelors, or old maids either, that you meet, and they will tell you, if you can get them talking confidentially with you, that they were desperate flirts in their youthful days."

"I hope you won't apply that epithet to me, George. Nothing is further from my intentions than to do anything that would be considered flirting in the most remote degree."

"Oh, yes; we all know you are very innocent and unsophisticated. How are you and Miss Sanderson coming on? That is your last affair, I believe. At any rate, I saw you so absorbed in conversing with her a few evenings ago, that you seemed to see no one else in the room."

"How could I, when she was developing to me the hidden meaning concealed under what she called the myth of the marriage of Venus and Vulcan?"

"That used to seem to me a very unsuitable and mysterious match when I was a schoolboy; but, since I have seen more of the world, I have ceased to wonder at anything in the matrimo-

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nial line. How did Miss Sanderson explain it?"

"If I were to write a folio volume, I might give you a faint idea of all the meaning she 'evolved from it,' to use her own words. She took me down into what she called the 'divine depths of the esthetic philosophy,' until the waters went over my head, and I knew no more. But I was sensible to the last, George, and I vowed a vow that, if I could get my feet once more on dry land, I would keep them there. But I must not be ungrateful to Miss Sanderson. I have learned a great deal from her; things that, I have no doubt, you are profoundly ignorant of. 'Phalanxes,' for instance, and 'passional attraction;' do you know what they mean?"

"No."

"There I have the advantage of you. I even had, during the first week that Miss Sanderson's eyes, 'so deeply, darkly, beautifully blue,' shone on me, a dim idea that it might be a very pleasant thing to join a phalanx, if I could be sure of the 'passional attraction' not being all on one side; but that has passed away."

"Like all your other fancies. Miss Philips, for instance, that you were desperately in love with three months ago, you have hardly spoken to lately. What was the matter there? She did not know too much, I am sure."

"No, that certainly is not her fault. To tell the truth, I saw her waltzing with Baron Pfeiffer one evening—that German that used to whirl about the room as if he were possessed—and she seemed so highly pleased and flattered with his attentions, that I was instantly disenchanted."

"You are too particular, Fred; you are looking for perfection, and, consequently, you will die an old bachelor."

"Time will show. I am sure I have a soft place in my heart that nobody has yet succeeded in touching, unless it is my little cousin Emily. I am not so sure about her. She cried when I left Westbrook, the only person that has shed a tear about me for the last twelve years, and I feel very grateful to her for them."

Not long after this conversation, Frederick Abbott was gazing from the windows of the railroad car on the fleeting forms of wood and hill, as he passed rapidly through one of the most highly cultivated and picturesque parts of New England. Waltzing ladies, and transcendental ladies, and even little cousins, faded from his mind, and only thoughts connected with his business called his attention off from admiration of the scenery through which he was travelling.

Sunday morning found him settled for the day at an inn in a quiet little village bosomed among the hills, so far away, and so shut out from all the turmoil and confusion of money-making and money-spending, that it seemed like a new world. To go regularly to church at least once a day, was a habit Frederick Abbott had inherited from the Puritans whom he numbered among his ancestors; and, if those severely virtuous ones still take an interest in the principles for which they battled with such grim earnestness, it must have been a satisfaction to them to know that their descendant was still "orthodox."

The Congregationalist church, or rather meeting-house, to call it by the name always given to it by the good people of the village, was a very primitive old-fashioned structure, with the pulpit perched up between the doors of the edifice, and consequently the seats facing in that direction. This was convenient on some accounts. It enabled the congregation to see all who entered without the trouble or scandal of turning their heads for the purpose; but it was rather embarrassing for a stranger to find himself suddenly brought under the inspection of so many curious and scrutinizing eyes. Mr. Abbott bore himself with great composure under this ordeal. The consciousness that one is good-looking assists one's fortitude amazingly under such circumstances. While many in the crowded congregation, taking care to keep their faces in the proper degree of Sabbath-day solemnity, had let their thoughts go wandering off to the handsome stranger, wondering who he was, and how long he was going to stay, he had quietly entered a pew, whose door stood half open, and, seating himself, gazed in his turn on the few who came dropping in as the bell rang its last summons.

He had not noticed the other occupants of the pew, except to see that they were two ladies dressed in black, until the hymn was given out. Then, turning to look for a book, the lady who sat next to him handed him one from a pile near her. As she performed this little act of courtesy, with the grave composure suited to the place and time, he was struck with her grace and loveliness. She was evidently very young, not more than seventeen, but not she who was "half of earth and half of heaven" could have had a sweeter face, or one more full of serene and holy thoughtfulness. She joined in the singing. Mr. Abbott had been expecting that, and had felt confident that her voice would equal her beauty. He was not disappointed. Full, rich, and melodious, yet softened and sub-

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duced by a restraining modesty, it rose and died on the ear without a discordant or untuneful tone marring the effect.

It is needless to say that the sermon that Mr. Abbott's heart kept time to was not the one that the congregation pronounced "very good, indeed; quite an effort," as they passed out of the meeting-house. And yet it seemed to him that sitting in the same atmosphere with so lovely and gentle a being had had an elevating effect upon him. He felt a great deal better, as he wended his way to his inn, than he had done when he left it. He was certainly more thoughtful.

He was one of the earliest, instead of the latest, at the church in the afternoon; and, seeking the same pew, waited in vain for his companions of the morning. Disappointed at not meeting them, he sought the landlord in the evening to find out who they were. But his host could tell him nothing about them. They were strangers in town, probably visiting some friends, he said, but he would find out what he could and let Mr. Abbott know. The next morning at breakfast he told his guest that they were a mother and daughter, who had been merely passing through the village, and had been detained by some accident over Sunday. They had stopped at the other inn, and had already left in an early line; he had not been able to discover either their names or their destination.

Mr. Abbott had been intending to go himself in the early line, and had only waited from his intense desire to learn something more of the fair unknown. Vexed at this most unfortunate delay, he started off in pursuit as soon as possible. But he might as well have gone in search of the sun's rays that had shone upon him the day before. Recalling her general style of dress and demeanor, he decided that his *incognita* was not a country girl. She possessed that indefinite yet peculiar characteristic that marks those who have been all their life accustomed to cities and the crowded haunts of men; and, fixing in his own mind on New York as her probable abode, he passed the greater part of an unusually warm summer on the hot and dusty pavement of Broadway, darting off in eccentric lines whenever he caught a glimpse of a dress or figure that reminded him of the one of whom he was in search.

This was but the commencement of a line of conduct that, while it often astonished those who were the victims of it, sometimes placed him in extraordinary and embarrassing situations.

He did not return to Boston till late in the summer. Dr. Lennox was one of the first who came to welcome him on his arrival.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" asked he, after the first greetings. "I passed the summer at Westbrook at your suggestion, and we were quite surprised to find that you seemed to have forgotten your promise of visiting your old friends there."

"Yes, George, I did intend to come; but, to tell the truth, something happened to me soon after I left you that completely altered all my plans. I spent the greater part of the summer in New York."

"In New York! What attraction was strong enough to keep you there in such melting weather?"

"I have seen," said Frederick, rising and walking rapidly up and down the room—"I have seen since I left you, George"——a long pause followed, in which Frederick seemed contending with unutterable thoughts.

"The elephant," suggested George, always willing to assist his friends in an emergency.

"No; a being lovelier than I had ever thought any mortal could be. Such a woman as we read about sometimes, but that I never supposed existed anywhere but in a poet's imagination."

"Where does she live?"

"I don't know."

"Is she agreeable?"

"I have never spoken to her."

"What is her name?"

"That I don't know either."

"Well, are you sure that she is a real being? Didn't you see her in a dream or vision, or something of that kind?"

"No. I could never have imagined anything equal to the reality. I sat in the pew with her for an hour or more one Sunday. After that she disappeared, and I have not yet been able to discover the slightest trace of her. But I am confident I shall meet her again. At any rate, I shall never give up the search till I have found her."

"I hope you may be successful; although, I confess, I do not see much prospect of it at present. But I am quite relieved to learn the state of your feelings. I have been afraid that you might think I had not treated you quite fairly in something that I have done this summer; but I don't see how I could help it."

"What is it?"

"Why, Fred, I fell in love with your little cousin, who happens, by the way, to be one of the tallest ladies I know. I did not intend to do it, of course, after what you said to me, and

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I put it off as long as I could, expecting you to come and look after your own interests; but we could not find out where you were or what you were doing, and there was a picnic, and I don't know as there is any use of my going into the particulars; indeed, I am not sure that my mind is settled enough yet for me to remember how it was all managed; but I am very sure that we arranged everything very nicely that day. We are going to be married in October, and you are to be groomsman, and I am to spend the rest of my life in Westbrook."

"How do you like that idea?"

"Oh, well enough. I have achieved quite a little surgical reputation there already, owing to a beautiful case of compound fracture that happened soon after I reached there; and I have come to the conclusion that the country isn't such a bad place to live in, when you are used to it."

"I shall be delighted to count you among my relatives," said Frederick, cordially, and he listened to Dr. Lennox's plans and prospects without the slightest feeling of envy; for *his* love and *his* hopes seemed as far removed from such ordinary earth-born happiness as the stars of heaven from the glow-worm in the turf at his feet.

Time would fail me if I were to attempt to relate all the adventures that Mr. Abbott met with while prosecuting his search. Every summer he went on a pilgrimage to the little village where he had first met the lady who had since reigned supreme in his heart. He always passed a Sunday there sitting in the same pew, and trying to recall the same sensations. Then diverging from that place, he visited all the country towns around, ending by a week or two in New York, and an excursion to the principal watering-places.

He gave up the practice of following ladies until he had obtained a glimpse of their faces, which he had at first incautiously fallen into, after having heard himself described at different times as a crazy man and a most suspicious-looking person; for he found that, however adroitly he tried to manage it, the object of his pursuit invariably became aware of it, and showed by her quickened pace and frightened glances over her shoulder that his countenance did not, as he had sometimes been flatteringly told it did, invariably inspire confidence.

"Have you heard of the excitement I produced in Mrs. Henderson's seminary for young ladies?" asked he, one day, of Dr. Lennox.

"No. What was it? For a man that everybody thinks a remarkably discreet sort of person, you meet a marvellous quantity of adventures."

"I am afraid I go in search of them. This last summer I was passing through Parkfield. It is a very pretty and quite a flourishing business place, and as I was detained there a day or two by some affairs of the firm, I, of course, attended to my own at the same time, and kept a close watch on all the feminine portion of the population. One evening, about twilight, I saw a young lady, in whom I was convinced I recognized my *incognita*, enter a large dwelling in some very highly ornamented grounds. I followed her immediately, and rang the bell. You know, I still have the hymn-book she offered me, and I intended to make the returning that an excuse for intruding upon her. I asked for the ladies. The servant looked rather puzzled, and wanted to know 'which of the young ladies I would like to see?'

"'The lady who has just entered,' I replied, as coolly as I could.

"'And is it Miss Mary Brown ye want?' she asked me, rather suspiciously.

"'To be sure,' said I; for the initials in the hymn-book were 'M. B.,' and I was certain I was right. I was shown into the parlor and left for some time. I heard nothing but pianos. I am confident there were at least eight going at once, and all playing different tunes. I thought the family must be music mad. Presently, a door leading from the parlor swung open, of its own accord, I thought at first; but I soon saw eyes peeping through the crack, and, by glancing cautiously in that direction, I counted seven girls crowding and crushing each other to get a look at me. I was a little concerned that they should think it necessary to pursue their investigations under such difficulties, and was half inclined to present myself before them."

"Suppose your *incognita* had been among them?"

"That idea is not to be entertained a moment. A slight movement I made scattered them with a noise like a flock of partridges, and the door, at the same moment, opening still more, I obtained a full view of a large hall full of girls of all sizes and ages. I looked eagerly, of course, but could see no one that reminded me of the one for whom I was seeking. I saw the servant-woman looking inquisitively about though, and then, saying a few words to a tall young lady, she pointed to the parlor. The young lady rose up, exclaiming, 'It's my brother! Oh, it's my brother!' and, extending her arms, she came rushing towards me. The hall

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was long, and the parlor was a large one; so that, though she never stopped screaming from the moment she started till she came quite close to me, I had time to consider how I should meet this emergency. As she drew near, I made her a very low bow, indicating the most profound respect. She stopped, looked at me, and, with another scream, rushed away. At the same instant, a tall, severe-looking lady entered, and examined me scrutinizingly.

"'Are you acquainted with Miss Brown?' asked she.

"'I have a little commission to her,' I replied.

"'If you will intrust it to me, I will attend to it.'

"The hymn-book was too precious to be trusted out of my hands; so I declined the offer as politely as I could.

"'Have you a letter from Mr. Brown?' asked she, looking at me as if I were a pickpocket; and I don't know that I felt unlike one.

"'No,' I replied. 'But I believe there is some mistake; the young lady who has just left the room is not the Miss Brown whom I wished to see.'

"'She is the only person of that name in my establishment,' said the lady, with an expression as though she did not believe me; and I was very glad to make her a bow and take my leave.

"I learned afterwards that poor Miss Brown, who was a great heiress, was kept under strict surveillance as long as I remained in Parkfield, under the impression that I had made up my mind to run away with her, and suspecting most unreasonably that she was carrying on some sort of clandestine intercourse with me. I confess, my conduct was rather suspicious, for I did not leave Parkfield until I had seen every individual in Mrs. Henderson's establishment, and satisfied myself that my 'M. B.' was not there. The girls used to titter and look significantly at each other whenever they met me, and I heard that Mrs. Henderson said that it was quite a load off her mind when she found I had really gone. She is laboring under a chronic fear, though, that I am intending to return secretly and obtain an interview with Miss Jones, and she has almost succeeded in impressing that excitable young lady with the same idea."

Seven years passed away in this fruitless pursuit. Let not constancy hereafter be thought to be a virtue of the past. For seven weary years Frederick Abbott had allowed no temporary divinity to dethrone her whom he had elected the queen of his heart. He had been content to find that he was no longer thought interesting, and to hear that he was universally considered a regular old bachelor. Yet he was still welcomed whenever he condescended to seek his old haunts; for Time, that had added years to his age, had also increased his income in the same proportion, and disinterestedness is not *the* virtue of the age.

One bright, pleasant afternoon in early fall, he went to fulfil an errand—an act of kindness for an old nurse of his mother's—into the midst of the oldest portion of Boston; that where the crooked streets became more crooked, the narrow narrower, and where there is a perfect labyrinth of alleys, places, squares, and courts.

As he returned, passing by a wooden house which had been a grand mansion in its day, he saw sitting at the window, an old-fashioned one, reaching nearly to the floor, the lady of the country church. She was sewing; but, as he passed, she raised her head, and the full light of her face, as calm, serene, and untroubled as when he had first seen it, fell on him, and he felt more than repaid for his long waiting and devotion.

He easily found out who they were—the widow and daughter of Captain Barnard of the army. A son of Mrs. Barnard was a clerk in a store with which Mr. Abbott had had dealings for some years, and, as he was slightly acquainted with him, he, of course, soon so far increased his intimacy that he obtained an introduction to his sister.

Some months after, when he was relating to the young lady how long and perseveringly he had sought for her, and in how remote places, he asked her how it could be accounted for that, living all the while in the same city, and so near each other, they had never met?

"I went out very little," she replied. "My mother is a great invalid, and needs my constant attention. Generally, I would walk with my brother early in the morning, or late in the evening, but seldom left the house at any other time. I was kept very busy, too, for all the sewing, and a good deal of the household work, fall to my share, as we are almost entirely dependent on my brother, and his income is very limited. That journey on which you met us is the only one I ever have taken. We were going then to see my grandparents, who have since died, and I have often thought that I should probably never leave Boston again."

"I always liked the idea of being a rich man. I suppose every one who has suffered from the want of money in early life, as I did, is inclined to value it too much; but I never thought it would give me as pure a pleasure as it does now, when I think, Mary, that there is hardly

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a wish you can frame that I cannot gratify; and, if you take it in your head to go to the ends of the earth, we will go together."

After such a speech as that, is it necessary for the historian to say that "they were married, and lived very happy ever after"?

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THE STEAM-BATH.: A SKETCH OF SOUTHERN LIFE.
Forsyth, Pauline
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THE STEAM-BATH.

A SKETCH OF SOUTHERN LIFE.

BY PAULINE FORSYTH.

Mrs. Rachel Heartt was one of Louden's most noted characters. Her father had been a mighty hunter, and all her early life had been passed on the frontiers of civilization. He was a well-educated man, and a widower, with but this one child, of whom he had been devotedly fond. All his unoccupied time was spent in attending to her education, and at the age of fifteen she was a good Latin and Greek scholar, a very fine shot, an excellent horsewoman, and managed her father's house, and plantation too, when he was absent, with great discretion. She married at that time a physician, but one who preferred hunting and out-door sports to the practice of his profession. When she was about thirty, she lost, within one year, both her husband and father. .On examining into the condition of their affairs, it was found that, though both had been supposed to be wealthy, their expenditure had so far exceeded their income that, out of their united possessions, only a small estate near Louden was left to Mrs. Heartt.

She removed there immediately, bringing with her a few old family servants and her husband's library, for which no purchaser had been found in the backwoods. Her mind was too active to remain contented long in the limited sphere to which her losses had reduced her. For want of other occupation, she took to the study of medi cine, for which she soon developed a decided vocation. She was one of those "women with a mission," that Dickens amuses himself and his readers about. They were rarer characters then than now, and Mrs. Heartt was so earnest and genuine a character that every one liked and respected her.

Thorough in everything she undertook, she made herself well acquainted with all the books on medicine in her library, and the ordinary diseases of the locality. The success she met with in her practice, which was really remarkable, was greatly exaggerated by rumor, and her reputation extended far beyond her county. She had, at one time, thirty patients ill with the

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scarlet fever, and they all recovered. After that, the common people regarded her as an oracle. One great addition to her popularity arose, no doubt, from her advice, and often her medicines, being given gratuitously. Her income was very limited, and she was obliged to deny herself many luxuries, and sometimes even comforts, to enable her to gratify her benevolence. But this active and useful life was so pleasant to her that she looked upon nothing connected with it as a sacrifice.

I am sorry to be obliged to relate that, after practising for some years on the allopathic system, she met with a Thompsonian doctor who made a complete convert of her; and when I knew her, "Number Six" and the "Steam-Bath" were her great remedies. She afterwards adopted the Homœopathic plan; but she never took kindly to the infinitesimal doses; and, when the Hydropathic school arose, she wrote to me for some books relating to it. I collected all I could find, and sent them out to her. It was a mode of practice peculiarly suited to her genius, and she is now *packing* vigorously. But she is hardly as popular as she once was, especially with the servants on the plantations around, who now seem to regard her rather as an infliction than a benefactor.

I owe my first acquaintance with her to a fever which attacked me during the second spring I passed in Louden. It was the first sickness I had had since the days of my infancy, and I hardly knew how to endure it. Indeed, I gave up all hopes of recovery when I found that I could not stand alone and was obliged to lie in bed all day. It was a degree of weakness from which it seemed madness to hope that I could rally. I looked at my pale hands, and pitied myself most sincerely, poor little thing, about to die so far away from home.

I am not sure that this quiet resignation to the worst is not in some cases a better plan than the habit some people have of forming in the blackest night the most sanguine anticipations of a bright morning; for, when you are in the depths of gloom and despair, the slightest ray of light is welcomed with joyful surprise; and when the morning comes, as it always does, even though it is a clouded one, its unexpectedness and its contrast to the darkness make it delightful! But when were sanguine expectations ever realized!

During the first week of my illness, Mrs. Heartt came to see me. She had never visited me before, though we had met occasionally, and I had always been favorably impressed with her appearance, yet I cannot say that she was a fine-looking or even a comely woman. Her features were large and strongly marked; her chin and the lower part of her face heavy; her hair sandy, and combed smoothly back from a forehead and cheeks that had somewhat of a weather-beaten look. But, notwithstanding all this, the practical good sense and great benevolence that were already expressed in every line of her face, seemed to throw into the background the contour of her features. You saw them, but as though under a softening and refining veil.

I am afraid I owed her first visit as much to professional curiosity as to sympathy, for she knew that I stood in no need of the latter, being surrounded by very kind and attentive friends. But she had no sooner entered my room than her practised eye discerned at once that I was not comfortably placed. Lifting me in her strong arms as though I had been an infant or a small bundle, she arranged in a moment the pillows and bed-clothes, so that, when she had laid me down again as carefully as she had taken me up, the difference seemed wonderful to me. She remained about an hour, and during all that time busied herself about me in the same effectual way. Everything she did was pleasant to me; the drink she held to my lips came at the very moment that I was wishing for it, and I never liked any one's mode of fanning half so well as hers. More than all, she did everything without asking me whether I liked it or not. That was her greatest charm to me, for I had grown exceedingly weary of being called on to make up my mind about what I would like to have done or left undone.

After the first greeting was over, I remained silent till Mrs. Heartt was tying on her bonnet to go, and then, impelled by a sudden impulse, I said—

"Do come again soon, Mrs. Heartt."

There must have been a very wistful look in my eyes as I spoke, for she bent over and kissed me, saying—

"Certainly, my dear. I will stay now if you wish it. And call me Aunt Rachel, Pauline, as everybody else does here."

I turned my face away while the tears came slowly rolling down my cheeks, and my breast heaved with the gathering sobs. If she had spoken another word to me, I should have lost all control over myself; but she stood quietly by me, passing her hand over my throbbing temples with a regular gentle motion that was very soothing.

I do not know whether, by some magnetic influence, the strength and calmness of her spirit were imparted to mine, or whether the

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effect was a purely physical one, but very soon my tears stopped of their own accord, and a delightful feeling of repose, languor, and perfect peace stole over me, and then I fell asleep. This was the commencement of a friendship between Aunt Rachel and myself that has been a source of great happiness to me. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered to bear the ride, she came over to ask me to return and spend a week or two with her.

We rode out to her place on horseback, for she had no carriage, and before we reached there, a sudden shower came up, which drenched us thoroughly. Aunt Rachel was very much troubled on my account, and with reason, for I had no sooner entered the house than I was seized with a violent chill.

"We must break this up directly," said she; "you are under my care now, not Dr. Warren's, and if you will do as I tell you, you will not have another shake this year."

I was very willing to obey her, for she had inspired me with the most unlimited confidence. In one of the rooms of her house, especially devoted to invalids, there was a tall, narrow box, about large enough to contain a man in a sitting posture. There was a small aperture in one side of it called a window, and a door with a bolt on the outside, the use of which I soon learnt.

This was Aunt Rachel's steam-bath, and she was very proud of it, and fond of relating the wonderful cures she had performed with it. The steam was introduced by some contrivance of her own, and I hardly think it was done in a scientific manner, though no one dared to insinuate such a thing to her.

I had not been in the house fifteen minutes before I was wrapped up in a blanket and sitting in the box, like a mummy in a sarcophagus. I was waiting for the warm, pleasant sensation I had been promised, when the hot steam poured in, nearly suffocating me. As soon as I recovered my breath, which I thought at one time gone forever, I put my head close to the little window, which was too small to allow me to look from with both eyes at a time, and implored to be let out. My entreaty met with a decided refusal.

"But I am suffocating!"

"No, you are not, my dear."

"I cannot endure it a moment longer."

"Yes, you can. Try it and see."

"I am dying."

"Nonsense, child; do you think I would put you where I didn't know you were safe."

I knew I could not live through any more; but, seeing that I was "shut up to it," I resolved to die like Cæsar, decently, and without any more useless entreaties. Ten minutes passed away, and the door was unbolted.

"How do you feel now, my dear? You're alive yet, I see."

"It is very pleasant now," I replied, a little ashamed of my fright, and wishing to make amends. "But did you ever try it yourself, Aunt Rachel?"

"No, dear, I am never sick."

"I wish you would try it once," said I, "and then you would know better how *delightful* it is."

A little while after the bath, Aunt Rachel came to my bedside with a vial full of a dark thick liquid. She poured some out in a spoon.

"Take this, my dear. It is some Number Six. It is the best thing in the world for chills, and is not disagreeable at all."

I swallowed it as unsuspectingly as I had entered the bathing-box; but if it had been liquid fire poured down my throat, I do not think it could have caused me greater agony for a moment. I could not speak for several minutes. At last I gasped out—

"Did you ever taste that, Aunt Rachel?"

"No, child. I never need such things, I am thankful to say."

"It is the most dreadful stuff!"

Aunt Rachel only laughed at me, and went away. She returned in a minute with another vial.

"I am going to drop some of this in your eyes, my dear; they look a little inflamed. I am afraid you use them too much."

So great was the influence that her calm, authoritative, self-relying manner gave her over my naturally passive and yielding disposition, that, if she had gone on proposing new remedies all night, and they had all turned out tortures, I should still have submitted to each one of them.

I believe the Thompsonian medicines are generally fiery in their nature. All that have been tried on me were. This eye-water was no exception to the rule. It brought tears in streams from between my closely shut eyelids. It seemed to me that I should never be able to open them again.

"Are you sure that is the right vial?" asked I.

"Certainly, my dear. Have you no more reliance on me than to suppose I would make such a mistake?"

This was cruel, considering what I was undergoing for her sake; for I had not been aware of the slightest inflammation in my eyes.

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"Aunt Rachel, I am afraid I am blind," said I, timidly.

"You are a foolish little child. Go to sleep."

And she kissed me and left me to my reflections. I tried to realize the probability of my never being able to see again, and found it but too easy. I began to wonder what I should do. It seemed to me people in such cases generally took to weaving baskets. How much could I earn in a day at that? I wondered. And how long would it take me to learn to read in raised letters? And did they ever print any novels in that way? which question, though not a very edifying one, interested me deeply; and in such musings I fell asleep.

The dread must have been on my mind all night, for my dreams were disturbed, and I woke very early, while it was yet too dark to discern a single object. The horror of that thick darkness fell around me like a pall as I thought that perhaps I might have to walk in it all the rest of my life. I shall never forget my sensations as the dim outline of the window slowly defined itself to my straining eyes, in the first gray light of the morning. Ever since then, if I wake before the sun, my eyes turn involuntarily to the window through which its earliest ray will stream, and when I discern it, the same emotions of trembling rapture fill my soul that I felt on that morning at Aunt Rachel's. It is as if I received my sight as a new gift.

I was soon well enough to need no attention, and, as Aunt Rachel was accustomed to spend a great part of the day in visiting her patients and attending to her little plantation, I was left alone for many hours at a time. Wishing to find some occupation for me, Aunt Rachel told me that she did not think I could find anything so improving and interesting as the study of medicine. I had a secret detestation of everything connected with it; but, to please her, I began it. No one need be astonished at this when they learn that I had, two years before, commenced the study of law, and read three pages in Blackstone to please an old bachelor uncle of mine, who recommended it most strongly to me as a most useful and delightful pursuit. I also learned the Greek alphabet, and puzzled over the Hebrew, for the sake of another old friend. Of course, I was prepared to study anything proposed by one who had been so kind to me. I have no doubt I should have been prepared for practice long since, if I had not been so troubled by symptoms. No sooner did I read of one than I felt it, and after two days' trial, Aunt Rachel told me herself to put the books away, that I was not capable of going on with it, which derogatory opinion of my capabilities gave me sincere satisfaction. I hunted out in their stead a complete set of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, and Sir Charles Grandison. I had read the first when I was thirteen, and, remembering the delightful horror with which they had filled me, I was quite disappointed to find how changed they appeared to me on this second perusal. Sir Charles Grandison I had never met before, and it occupied me several days.

I was in the room generally used as a sitting-room by Mrs. Heartt, not only for herself, but for all her visitors. Her bed, standing in one corner of it, was considered rather as an ornament than otherwise. I was deeply engaged in the last volume of Sir Charles when a man entered unceremoniously.

"Aunt Rachel here?" asked he, with a familiar nod.

"No," I replied; "she will be at home in an hour or two, though."

"I reckon I mought as well wait."

And he sat down and looked inquisitively at me. I glanced at him now and then, but, as he never seemed to think it necessary to remove his eyes from my face, I found that I was pursuing my observations under difficulties too hard for me. He was a rather tall and very thin man, with a sallow face and small puckered-up features. He was really not more than thirty, but he might readily have passed for forty. His clear brown eyes redeemed his face from positive ugliness, they had such a bright and pleasant expression; and for a good, steady, unwavering gaze, I never knew their equal. I found myself growing rather nervous under it, and, unable to read, I began to wonder when he would get used to my looks; whether he thought me so astonishingly ugly, or whether he was discovering hidden beauties. I rather inclined to the latter supposition. Sometimes I felt as though my eyes were the particular object of his curiosity; sometimes I was sure it was my nose, and, all at once, it struck me that perhaps it was my mouth. I was a little sensitive about my mouth, and I felt that I could not bear the silent inspection any longer. I closed the book and gazed back at him.

"Fond of reading?" asked he, as though he had known me all my life.

"Yes."

"Well, that is a thing I don't see the slightest use in. It's all waste of time to me. They put a heap of learning into me when I was a boy, but I took it mighty hard. I reckon I've forgotten every word of it, and I'm just as well

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off. You are the stranger that's visiting Aunt Rachel?"

"Yes."

"You are a foreigner?"

"No," with a surprised look.

"A Yankee, I mean," said he, hesitatingly, as though he were afraid of hurting my feelings.

"Yes," replied I, with an emotion of pride, for while the word suggested to him only peddlers, to me it was full of aspiring, triumphant genius, and the pilgrim fathers.

"It seems mighty strange," said he, surveying me again, "to see a lady Yankee. I hav'n't felt quite easy in my mind towards your country-people for some time. I don't think I'd like to trust myself alone in the room with one of them for fear I might do him some hurt. Of course, I don't mean the ladies; they are the same everywhere, I believe. Have you ever heard the last trick the Yankees played me?"

As I had never seen him before, and did not know his name, of course I answered in the negative.

"Well, I'll tell you, and see if you don't think it was enough to make a man angry. You know your people can't stay at home, but are always wandering about the country"—a very conscious guilty feeling came over me"—and they are mostly peddlers, I believe; anyway, I never saw one that wasn't. I met one last December, that had a lot of andirons to sell; nice-looking iron ones they were, and he was offering them very cheap. I told him I didn't see how he could make a living at that rate, and he looked so mighty meek and innocent, and said it was dreadful hard work to get along, that I couldn't help feeling sorry for him. I was very near taking two pair of the andirons, but I concluded not to buy but one. It happened to be a warm spell of weather, and I didn't have a fire made for a week or two. But one day when I was going out, I told Polly, my cook you know, to have a good fire for me when I came back at night. Well, when I went into the dining-room, what should I see but the coals scattered all over the hearth, and some of them had rolled on to the floor, and, in a minute longer, the house would have been on fire! I called for Polly, and asked her what she meant by making the fire in that way, and where the andirons were. She said that she had put them in the fire-place, and when she came and saw that they were gone, she looked so scared that I didn't know what to make of it. She said a sperrit had come and taken them away. I asked her what she thought spirits wanted with andirons; and, while I was talking, I went on putting up the fire. All at wonst I came across something that looked very suspicious. I said, 'What's this, Polly?' 'Laws, mast'r, it's de andiron,' says she. And, sure enough, we found bits of them here and thar in the fire, and when we came to look at them, they turned out to be nothing but painted wood. They were mighty hard wood; I'll do the Yankee the justice to say that. But I tell you, Miss, I would give something handsome if I could come acrost that man only once more.

"Ah, Aunt Rachel, how dy?" continued he, addressing that lady as she entered the room. "I've been waiting for you for some time, but this young lady and me has been having quite a pleasant chat."

I had said "No" twice, and "Yes" as often.

"You see, Aunt Rachel, I can't get shut of my shakes. I took some Number Six, and it helped me; but I had another fit of them this morning, and I made a bee-line for your house to see if you couldn't break them up for me at wonst. I hear a heap of that steam machine of yours, and I thought that perhaps if you would give me a turn in it, it might do me good."

"Misguided man!" thought I.

Aunt Rachel was highly pleased.

"Certainly I will," said she. "I am sure it will be of use to you."

I wondered how he would bear the operation, and my curiosity was soon gratified; for the room he was to occupy being separated from Aunt Rachel's only by a thin partition, I could hear their conversation distinctly.

It had been quite late in the evening before the bath had been prepared; and when, after it, while he was lying down recovering from its effects, Mrs. Heartt went in to administer some of her other remedies, he greeted her with—

"Now, Aunt Rachel, I always thought you were a Christian and a well-meaning woman; but I'd like to know if you consider it a human thing to shut a man up in a box and smoke him to death. If ever you catch me in that steam fixin' of yours again, you may trade me off for a bobtail dog, and shoot the dog. It's a heap worse than a b'ar fight; and, if I ever get my strength again, if I don't give that Joe of yours a thousand, it will be because I can't. When I told him I was being murdered, I heard him laughing to himself, as though it was mighty good fun."

"How do you feel now?" asked she.

"Why, Aunt Rachel, I hain't got a grain of stiffenin' left in me. I could tie myself up into a double bow-knot and twist the ends into a cockade, just as easy as rolling off a log. It's

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as true as preaching, Aunt Rachel; and I don't know when I can hold myself up again."

According to her usual custom, Aunt Rachel proposed to read a chapter to him before leaving him.

"So do, Aunt Rachel," said he; "that's a first-rate contrivance of yours for making a man think of his sins. The way I forgave everybody and repented wasn't slow. It would have been mighty handy, too, if I could have remembered any little prayer; but I couldn't think of a thing but

'How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey every day
From every opening flower.'

I reckon I must have said that over twenty times."

The next morning Mr. Inskeep, for so had he been introduced to me, found himself, to his surprise, well enough to sit up; and, as Aunt Rachel went out on her customary errands, we were left to entertain each other. Discovering that I was a good listener, he was insensibly led on to tell me all the interesting particulars of his life. I learned, among other things, that he was engaged to a Miss Nanny Tenney, and that the wedding was to take place in two weeks, with many particulars concerning the young lady. "She was a low woman," he said, meaning short, "with sandy hair; she had the prettiest red jaws he had ever seen, and was mighty peart."

After a while, I found my thoughts wandering to Sir Charles and Harriet Byron, and, taking advantage of a little pause in his monologue, I resumed my reading. After sitting uneasily for a few minutes, Mr. Inskeep asked me if I had any objection to reading out. I was perfectly willing to do so; but, as I was in the middle of the last chapter, he found it more incomprehensible than interesting. He asked me so many questions as I went on, that I was obliged to begin at the beginning and relate all the story to him. His whole heart and soul seemed to be absorbed in it as I went on, and, my interest being quickened by his, I entered into the minutiæ of some of the most important passages; and, in fact, though it was high noon when I commenced, the shades of evening had stolen over us before I had finished.

I was so pleased with the wonder and delight with which he had listened to me, that I had already determined to astonish him with all Mrs. Radcliffe's horrors, when, indulging in a long stretch and yawn, he said—

"Thank you, Miss. Do you know, Miss Pauline, they talk a heap about you down at the town. They say you are a right nice girl, but you are so still. Tom Jessup says you stayed a month with his sister, and he never heard you open your lips; and here you have been talking six hours without stopping a minute. I am pretty peart with my tongue—father used to tell me I was like a sheep's head, all jaw—but I couldn't beat that. I'll tell the people down at Louden that you can talk fast enough when you want to."

I had several twinges during this little speech. Those remarks of his about my silence hit me upon a very tender point. "It was true, and I was sorry for it," as a member of Parliament said, when he was called on to apologize for some inadvertent language. "Mr. Speaker, I did call that honorable gentleman a knave. It is true, and I am sorry for it." And yet, though I would have liked very well to have it known that I could talk on an emergency, I didn't feel pleased with having it supposed that Mr. Inskeep was the one who had aroused me to such unusual exertion.

"You forget," said I, "that I read for some time."

"Only a very little," replied he. "You talked most of the time. In fact, I wouldn't care to hear anybody talk any more." And he gave me an approving look, as much as to say, "Don't be too modest about it."

My self-complacency has not often been more completely subdued than it was by Mr. Inskeep's compliment. I returned to my monosyllabic replies immediately.

He remained a week under Aunt Rachel's care, and by the end of that time he seemed to have formed quite a brotherly attachment for me. "The low woman with red jaws" had no cause for jealousy, however; for, so far from his interest being personal, my want of the matrimonial prospects which were brightening his future was a source of great trouble to him. He condoled with me on the subject till I found myself getting almost out of patience.

"I'll tell you what it is, Miss Pauline," said he, one day, "I have got a cousin Peter Inskeep, a first-rate man; and he'll have you in a minute, if you'll say the word. He told me the other day that he thought it high time he was getting married. I will tell him to go and see you."

"He need not come. Of course, I shall not see him if he does," I said, with a proper degree of spirit.

"Now, Miss Pauline, you couldn't have a finer chance. He's very well off, and there isn't a better provider anywhere."

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After this, when he was not talking to me about Miss Nanny, he entertained me with the history and position of his cousin Peter.

I returned to Louden, and several weeks passed away without my having heard anything of Mr. Inskeep but that he had brought his bride home, when I was suddenly accosted by him in the street. After the first greetings, he said—

"I heard you were engaged, Miss Pauline. Is it true?"

"No."

"I thought it couldn't be. No such good luck, eh? Well, don't be discouraged about it. I had been trying for seven years, and was nigh on to thirty before I could get any one to have *me*. Has cousin Peter been to see you yet?"

"No."

"Well, he's coming. I told him about you, and he said just wait till he had a new coat made, and he'd come down in a hurry."

"I hope he won't take the trouble."

"Oh, it isn't the least trouble; he'll be sure to come. Farewell."

I shook hands with him, but not very cordially. In a few minutes, I heard my name called again, and, looking back, saw him hurrying after me.

"I forgot to tell you," said he, "what I stopped you for. You see, you haven't any father or brother out here; and now I want you just to let me know if anybody says anything to you you don't like, and I'll fight for you if there were a dozen against me."

There was such an earnest, unaffected goodwill and friendliness in his manner, that my feelings of annoyance were all forgotten in a moment. Our second adieus were very cordial.

Having no necessity to call upon him for his assistance, I never saw him again. Neither have I yet received that visit from his cousin Peter. His coat, it seems, is still unfinished.

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THE OLD FARM HOUSE AND ITS INMATES.
Porter, Ann E
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THE OLD FARM HOUSE AND ITS INMATES.

BY ANN E. PORTER.

"WELL, doctor, what shall we try next?" said my mother, as that most worthy gentleman, our family physician, Dr. Bradstreet, seated himself by the open fire, in the front chamber of our house in Middle Street.

I was then a feeble little invalid, propped up by pillows in the large easy-chair; and, though it was early spring, and I could hear the merry voices of children at play, and, by a little stretching of my neck, could catch from the narrow street, lined on each side with tall brick houses, glimpses of blue sky (oh! how far away they seemed though), and could feel now and then a softer breeze from the green fields beyond the city, yet I was too sick to stray far from the narrow room where I then sat.

I loved the doctor; he never knew how much, for doctors were great personages in those days, and I never ventured to be very familiar with so august a character. This was before the days of hydropathy and homœopathy, that have almost taken captive the whole army of regulars. By the storming of one, and by the stratagem of the other, I fear they will succeed. But our good doctor died before this onslaught upon his profession. Peace to his ashes!

He was a learned and a gentle man; I can almost draw his full-length portrait now; the blue coat with brass buttons, the white vest that opened wide, displaying the broad plaited shirt-ruffles, and I recall, too (for having, from bashfulness, a habit of looking down, and therefore judging people as much by the feet as the head), the fine white stockings and polished shoes, with neat buckles which he always wore. Sometimes, if he happened to come on Sunday, the stockings were silk. Whether I took my cue from the doctor or not, I cannot tell; but I have ever since had a fancy for neat feet-dressings, and with some of the first money which came under my own control, I purchased a pair of silk stockings and black satin shoes.

A gold-headed cane and a snuff-box were the invariable companions of the doctor.

He placed the one in a corner of the room, and, while regaling himself with the other, he looked at my little pale face in the corner, and from thence his eye fell on the tall three-story house across the way, which so completely shut out air and sunshine, and thence down into the narrow street. Then, taking my little cold hand in his, he said, turning to my mother—

"Madame, I have little confidence in medicine in this case. Sunshine and fresh air will do more for her than drugs. Is there no place in the country where you can place the child with friends, and let her run about the fields, play when she pleases, sleep when she lists, and be, if possible, a merry little animal!"

Oh! how my little heart bounded, and how I thanked him from its very depths, though I dared not speak a word! No more bitter pills or more nauseous rhubarb; and *he* had said it; he who gave the bitter draught was now administering honey.

And, kind reader, this was a regular, old-fashioned doctor too, who might have kept me a prisoner in that room, perchance a year, and received his daily fee, until the slow poison of vitiated air and unwholesome drugs had done their work, and I, "by a mysterious providence," as some good folks would say, was taken from life. The doctor sacrificed his fees, and saved me.

My parents acceded to his proposition and I

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was soon domiciled in a country home, three miles from town. Oh! wasn't it a pretty place? A large, old-fashioned, rambling farm-house, with rooms enough for a country tavern, but more neatly kept. An ell here, an odd wing there, in one part one story high, in another two. There were a large kitchen and a cheese-room attached, where, every morning, the milk from a large number of cows was turned, by what seemed to me a very mysterious process, into white curd. I remember the great brass kettle, the cheesepress, and the old-fashioned red churn; and I shall never forget my delight at being permitted to make a cheese in a four inch hoop! Neither do I forget the pantry, where such quantities of bread, and pies, and light gingerbread were manufactured daily.

The house stood on a little elevation, and commanded a fine view: the ocean in the distance—Kent's Island, a little green gem, nearer—and a small river, which curved round, at a short distance from the house, and served to turn a mill. This last was then an appurtenance to the farm; and, near by, was the miller's house.

The family was large, consisting of one aged but active, sociable old lady (a widow), her son and his wife; their son and his wife, and three children. A daughter of the latter soon afterwards married, and resided awhile at home, and, if I am not misinformed, her first child was born there. So that under the same roof were five generations, living in peace and plenty. They were very healthy, and I have thought many times since that a residence there would take many more fees from the doctors.

Every morning, before sunrise, the whole household were astir; doors and windows thrown open even in early spring and lingering autumn, "for," said Madame P., the mistress of the establishment, that is, the elder of the three wives, "there 's no living without air." I never heard any discussion about diet; that this was unhealthy, or that wouldn't do to eat—but the whole household sat round the large table, on which was an ample supply of good wholesome food. Milk, butter, cheese, eggs, and fowls were always "handy," and there was no lack of skilful hands to compound them for the table.

Indigestion, if there was any, was cured by labor, for there were no drones in the household; none whose hands did not hold the distaff, the plough, the churn, or the rolling-pin. Indeed, the only ones who indulged at all in long sitting were grandma'am and the elder Mr. P., whose silvered head might be seen occasionally by the fireside after dinner, in his arm-chair, reading the weekly newspaper.

I spent much of my time out of doors; an hour every morning in the spacious old barn, where I regularly took a swing, and where I remember at the same time a matronly old hen would enter her nest in a corner near me.

I swung while she laid her egg, and then I would carry the egg into the house, where one of the kind ladies prepared it with sugar and milk, and gave me gingerbread to eat with it.

Sometimes, when tired of play, I would sit down by grandma'am's side, and there I always found entertainment enough. With her black bag, knitting-sheath, and stocking, she often sat down, and then she became very sociable about old times. She remembered the Revolutionary War, had known and heard Whitefield, and her memory was stocked with tales of the marvellous. She could repeat some of Whitefield's sermons, and describe his appearance, and the wonderful revival which took place under his preaching. "And now, grandma," I would say, "please tell about the 'dark day.'"

"Lawful sake! child, what makes you want to hear about that? I hope I shall never see another such." And the old lady took a pinch of snuff to console her for such a thought. "You see, it was in the war time, and there were signs and wonders in the heavens above and the arth beneath; it was a terrible cold winter, so that many people were frozen to death, and the snow was so deep you could not see a fence between here and Prison Lane. There was a wolf, driven by hunger, I suppose, came right into Captain Adams's yard, and killed five of his sheep. At last spring came, but it was a sad time, I assure you. Our poor soldiers were fighting for liberty, but they hadn't shoes to their feet or coats to their backs, and we were trembling all the time lest the regulars would beat. I never saw a more gloomy May; the sun didn't shine out clear for weeks, but looked of a murky red, and the air was thick and heavy. One morning, it seemed brighter and warmer, and I started to see Cousin Polly, who lived in Fish Street. As I was walking, I happened to cast my eyes to the west, and saw clouds moving like swift horses over the sky. It was very still, scarcely a breath of wind stirring, and yet the clouds kept coming up faster and faster. I ran till I came to Polly's, all out of breath, and found all the family gazing at the sky. It grew darker and darker till twelve o'clock, and then we all began to think, surely the Judgment Day has come. It was 'pitch dark;' you couldn't see your hand before your eyes; the hens went to roost, and the birds that had been singing in the morning went to their nests; and for awhile it was still as midnight out of doors,

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though in the houses children were sobbing and men praying. At last the bell tolled, and lights were carried into the meeting-house, for we thought, if it were the last day, we better be found in the house of God.

"It was a trying time to the wicked, I can tell you. One Jo Short, that kept a little grocery in Prison Lane, went through the streets, crying, 'I've watered the rum! I've watered the rum!' Others confessed their sins less publicly. The sky had a strange yellowish look even when it was not at the darkest. The night that followed was the darkest I have ever known. I didn't go home, but I couldn't sleep, expecting every moment to hear the great trumpet sound and the dead arise. But about one o'clock I saw that the sky began to grow lighter in the east; then the wind to blow gently; and at last the day broke; the sun came out, and it seemed to me earth never was so much like heaven; and I thought of two Bible verses, 'And there shall be no night there.' The other, 'And shall cast them out into outer darkness.'"

"But what made the darkness, grandma?"

"What made it, child? Why, God sent it. Some pretended it was caused by woods on fire; some said one thing, some another; but *I* believe it was a sign from Heaven, for in November following, that Judas (Arnold) betrayed his country. You know that it is always darkest just before the break of day, and all these things happened to try the faith and patience of our country, struggling for liberty. But Washington came out bright at last, as the sun after the 'dark day.'"

"And what was the 'Ipswich fright' a sign of, grandma?"

"La, child! a sign that the fools wer'n't all dead; and yet if you ever live to see war in this country, you 'll not wonder either that people are easily frightened at such times. It was just after the fight of Lexington, which had made us feel that we must fight it out, and all our townspeople agreed that we must send men and provisions. A town meeting was appointed, and Parson Cary had begun his prayer, when somebody rushed up the stairs. 'The regulars! the regulars! Turn out, or you 'll all be killed! They are at Ipswich, cutting and slashing all before them!' A great many men had gone to join the troops at Boston, a few days before, and this made the women and children more afraid. Many of them went to Turkey Hill, and spent the night together, crying and taking on as if they were made prisoners already. Our neighbor, John Parsons, hid all his papers under a stone, and then fastened his house, shouldered his musket, and stood waiting to shoot the regulars, as if he could fight the whole British army alone. I was a girl then; my father was gone, and my brothers were away from home; so mother and myself started for Uncle Jo's. The streets were full; some had all their goods and children packed in oxcarts, and were driving, they didn't know where themselves, to escape the regulars. A man on horseback rode through the streets screaming, 'They 're here! they 're got as far as Old Town Bridge, and are killing everybody!'

"'Let 'em come!' said an old fat man, who stood at his door with his musket loaded. 'Let 'em come; I 'll shoot the devils!'

"We saw Sally Morse sitting on a great stone, with an empty pillow-case in her hands, crying as if her heart would break, while her children stood round her.

"'Now we shall starve to death!' she said. It seems she had put her pewter and silver ware in a basket and let it down the well, and then filled her bag with all the cooked victuals she had, and started for some place of safety; but where, she could not tell.

"Having laid down her bag to return on some errand, she found, on coming back, that its contents had all been taken, though it must have been done by other than regulars, as they had not yet made their appearance.

"A little farther, upon the steps of Mr. Noble's meeting-house, sat a woman, crying piteously, while a faithful old cat, which she had just thrown violently down, stood mewing by her side.

"'Oh, dear!' said she, 'what will become of my baby! I have run four miles with this cat in my arms, thinking it was little Susy, and I didn't find out my mistake till I sat down here to nurse it.'

"Poor woman, we pitied her, but we couldn't give her much comfort, for just then a man ran through the streets crying: 'Flee for your lives! flee for your lives!'

"The panic lasted all night, and such a Babel as the town presented was never seen before. At last a gentleman came riding in hot haste from Ipswich to quiet the people by informing them that it was a false report. He had ridden twelve miles in fifty minutes. We then

> 'Returned safe home, right glad to save
> Our property from pillage,
> And all agreed to blame the man
> Who first alarmed the village.'"*

* An interesting account of the "Ipswich fright" is given in Coffin's History of "Ould Newberry." The author of the above sketch is indebted to him for some of the facts mentioned.

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